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Rajah 1827

CLARA DE MONTFIER,

A MORAL TALE.

WITH ORIGINAL POEMS.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

TO THE

Right Hon. Lady Charlotte Greville.

BY

ELIZABETH ANNE LE NOIR,

AUTHOR OF

VILLAGE ANECDOTES.

VOL. I.

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TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

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TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

Lady Charlotte Greville,

MADAM,

THE approbation your Ladyship was pleased to express of the first volume of this little work, (through my excellent friend, the venerable Doctor Burney,) alone could have emboldened me to solicit the distinguished honor of your patronage. In presenting the other two, I still flatter myself so far as to hope that you, Madam, will not repent your condescension. The plan is the same though the scene is occasionally altered; whatever the execution, the design is not wholly unworthy of such a patroness.—To imitate nature in general. —To represent virtue, essentially so estimable, attractive too.—To recommend and do

homage to piety, its only solid foundation; and to hold up to suffering worth, and oppressed innocence, a consolotary picture, wherein they may awhile forget the injustice of fortune, and the world, and enjoy for ideal characters, the happiness denied them in their own.

Without presuming to obtrude upon your delicacy, Madam, the just encomiums, which those who best deserve, are always most unwilling to allow, permit me to say, that your Ladyship's name and sanction, will constitute the chief merit of this trifling performance, and stamp the inferior metal with a value not its own.

I have the honor to be,
With equal gratitude and respect,
Madam,
Your Ladyship's most obliged,
And devoted Servant,
ELIZABETH ANNE LE NOIR.

NOVEMBER 8, 1808.

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CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OUTLINES.

SOME years antecedent to the late memorable revolution, there dwelt in that most inaccessible part of France, since called La Vendée, the Baron De Montfier, a man of great merit, and of a singular turn of mind. He had spent a few years of his youth in the service of his country, according to the established custom of men of rank in those days; but, his father dying, he soon quitted a way of life, for which he had but little inclination, married, and retired to his estate at Montfier, where he fixed his abode.

This estate although extensive was far from being proportionably productive, the roads around were every where so bad, and the distance from any frequented mart so great, that very little of the produce could be conveyed from home. The Baron's late father had never resided there; he lived entirely at Paris, and knew little of his property but the rents it afforded him, which were usually due to his creditors some time before he received them: he had that sort of prodigality, which is often mistaken for generosity, and usually so called: he was thoughtless, careless, and improvident, fond of pleasure, of dissipation, and parade, and determined to procure such enjoyments at whatever the price; free to lend when he happened to have the means, and equally indifferent both as to the payment or recovery of his debts; every one might plunder him; but he seldom gave, and never to worthy objects; in short he was always squandering, and always distressed.

The present Baron, who, during his father's life time, had never allowed himself to reflect upon a conduct of which, he continually felt the inconveniencies; had yet too solid an understanding, and a way of thinking too just, not to profit by his experience. The wisest admonitions against indiscretion, would probably have had less effect than his conviction of its fatal consequences, and if the father was young all his life, the son might be said, to have never been so at all. The only imprudence that could be imputed to this last was his marriage; for although in great want of ready money, he chose a lady that was portionless, when he had the option of another at least as beautiful, who was also rich; he had reasons for this preference, perhaps, not altogether unfounded; he had determined to reside upon his estate and was desirous that his partner for life should have no right to plead to the enjoyments of

Paris, nor any greater inclination for them, than he fancied he observed in his Clara.

The temper and talents of Monsieur De Montfier, were eminently adapted to the life he had chosen; though of a serious and contemplative turn, he had great activity both of mind and body; the first, he directed to forming plans for the improvement of his lands, and the well-being of his tenants, and dependants; the latter to seeing these plans executed. He had read a great deal, and with advantage; he had seen enough of the busy world, to be cured of any desire of returning to it; while the solidity of his judgment rendered the experience he had obtained of double value. His taste for poetry disposed him to enjoy with enthusiasm the beauties of nature, as well as all correct representations of those beauties: he was likewise well acquainted with the principles of music, and no contemptible

performer on the violin: above all, his native benevolence was heightened and directed by the sincerest piety; he was truly a father to all within the reach of his assistance, while each looked up to him for counsel and support, as to a superior being.

The Baron De Montfier had been a widower about three years, at the period when we shall take up this history; his lady contracted a disorder in her last lying-in, which terminated in her death two years afterwards; she left a daughter, now turned of seventeen, and two sons, the one seven, the other five years old. The care of cultivating the minds of his children was Monsieur de Montfier's darling occupation, and their cheerfulness and prattle one of his most agreeable relaxations. He had no other companion with whom he could exchange ideas to any advantage, except the parish priest,

or *Curé*, whose name was Du Plessis; this worthy pastor had been presented by him to the benefice, and both from principle and inclination was well qualified to second his endeavours, for the instruction and well being of its isolated inhabitants. Monsieur Du Plessis, had no brilliant endowments; his manners were as simple as his heart was upright; gentle, just, and beneficent, his whole income was devoted to the wants of his parishioners, and all his time and study to their instruction. The Baron often met him at sun rise endeavouring to conceal under his cassock a large pitcher of broth, which he was carrying to some distrest person, whose wants he would not expose even to his own domestics. If a labourer or peasant was incumbered with a numerous family, the good Curé never failed to place the boys, as soon as possible, with some one of the farmers; and to pay for their board, till their strength enabled them to earn it.

Such were the principal personages in this retirement; the next in note were the servants at the mansion house; of whom Mademoiselle Fréron, late waiting woman to its deceased mistress, was now the housekeeper and the chief. She was a native of Nantz, and having seen something more of the world than most of her neighbours, was not a little vain of her superiority; in other respects, she was a notable, a trusty and valuable servant, and very capable of instructing her young mistress in domestic economy, needle-work, and such little details as fall within the female department. Mademoiselle De Montfier, who was called Clara, after her mother, had for her attendant a young girl of the name of Therese, a daughter of one of the farmers: she was lively and obliging, and made up in willingness, what she might want in experience and ability. Monsieur De Montfier's valet was called Antoine; he had lived in the family until

he seemed a necessary part of it, and had no fault, but the familiarity almost inseparable from long service. The suite of domestics being rather numerous, we shall pass over the rest, while we give a slight sketch of their habitation.

The mansion-house or chateau, though it might bear the literal translation of the latter term, and be very properly called a castle, was a square building, one story high, with a tower at each angle, and surrounding walls. It had been given up to the ravages of time for several generations, and when Monsieur De Montfier, took possession of it, scarcely afforded a room that was habitable; he repaired only what was requisite to make a comfortable family house, selected the best of the furniture, and supplied what was deficient, with plain, modern articles.

The large massy door of the chief entrance, opened to a hall, surrounded by a

gallery, to which a staircase led on each side. To the right of the entrance was the East angle, containing the kitchen and offices, to the left the suite of rooms inhabited by the family; the Baron had here his study, with a window commanding the avenue to the house; while Clara's room adjoining had glass folding doors that opened upon a flower garden, the amusement of her leisure hours. In this apartment, she spent most of her time in summer; and in a larger, at the extremity of the angle, she kept school twice a week, for the little girls of the village, and assisted by Mademoiselle Freron, instructed them in reading, writing and needle work.

The apartments of Clara, and the upper female servants, were over this wing; and on the opposite, those of the Baron, his sons and the male domestics; there like-

wise was the library, furnished with a choice collection of books in every branch of useful and polite literature.

One of the towers was used as a dove house, the opposite furnished store rooms; in a large apartment underneath the last, Mademoiselle Clara, usually sheltered the birds in severe weather: and the remainder of the edifice, on the north side, was given up to the rats, owls, and bats, its ancient and unmolested inhabitants.

The castle stood on a rising ground; a large, and very excellent garden was within its inclosure; the moat which surrounded it had been cleaned, and supplied with running water at a very moderate expence, for there was no deficiency either of workmen or good will, in the village of which the Baron De Montfier, was the master. The moat was soon stored with excellent fish;

and the old trees, after a few years' pruning, yielded fruit abundantly, not large indeed, but of an exquisite flavor.

A long avenue of venerable elms led to the castle, and in front of it, was a fine smooth lawn, where, in the afternoon of Sundays and holidays, the young villagers usually assembled to dance.

The court before the chief entrance had been walled round, with a lodge in the centre for a porter; but as this wore an air of gloom and melancholy, the Baron had caused it to be taken down, and thereby opened the way to a very agreeable prospect.

The country round was fertile and picturesque, agreeably diversified with hill and dale, with rich woods, pastures and clear meandering waters; a branch of the great Loire was the most beautiful, and

useful of these last: it supplied the moat round the castle, and after winding its course through many miles of the adjacent country, returned its riches to the parent stream about a league beyond its source.

The church and parsonage, which last was usually called in France the presbytery, were at the distance of about a mile and a half from the castle; they were situated, to the East of the extremity of the avenue; and might be seen from the towers of the castle. Several walks led to these, all pleasant and kept in the best possible repair.

CHAPTER II.

THE VILLAGERS.

Monsieur De Montfier had a few neighbours, if persons residing at the distance of several leagues, where the roads were impracticable in the winter, and very difficult at all times, could be so called. These had nothing of gentle, but their birth and their names; and were not at all superior to their own vassals, either in breeding or information. But the Baron's chief resource was his books; here he was sure to find select company, and of this a variety; his individual ideas im-

proved, and better expressed; in the best authors, his own mind reflected as in a faithful mirror; and among these, wise friends, with whom he might consult, cheerful companions with whom he might unbend, remedies in every mental infirmity, and solace in every pain; a faithful picture of, and an ample compensation for, the world he had abandoned.

His library did not, however, contain any modern plays or romances, that might have given Clara an idea of the manners of the age; of which she was, consequently, totally ignorant; for in her native plains there reigned an almost primitive simplicity; not altogether, it must be confessed, without some of its attendant inconveniencies; the peasants united with their ignorance a great deal of obstinacy; and experience could hardly convince them, that any mode of cultivation not used by their forefathers, could be either proper or profitable.

Monsieur De Montfier tried experiments upon the land he kept in his own hands for several years, with uninterrupted success, ere he could prevail upon his tenants to adopt his plans. In a season of extraordinary drought, half the cattle would have perished for want of fodder, if the Baron had not laid up a provision of hay in two abundant years that preceded it; for such was the improvident stupidity of these farmers, that in plentiful seasons they would leave all their crops to the discretion of the cattle, to be wasted and trodden under foot; and thus when dearth followed, were wholly without resource. It was with the utmost difficulty that Monsieur De Montfier could prevail on any of them to adopt measures of prudent precaution; the smallest expence or trouble for which they did not perceive any immediate necessity, was an obstacle not to be surmounted.

Among the number, however, a few were more open to conviction; and their example, together with the influence of the Baron, and the striking and happy effects of good husbandry, were making every day fresh advances to improvement; the land became productive in proportion as its inhabitants became tractable, and twenty years residence of a wise and good master, had produced the most sensible benefit. A good husbandman began no longer to be considered as a sorcerer, a character, which, before, his success seldom failed to procure him.

" *Mon bon homme*," said the Baron, one day to an old peasant, when he had resided little more than a year, upon his estate, " how comes it, that your crop of barley is so poor, when Guilloit's, just by, is so very fine?"

" Ah! Monsieur," replied the old man, " there is a good reason for the difference."

" What reason, good man? the soil appears to me to be much the same," said the Baron, turning it up with his stick."

" Yes, the land's the same, sure enough, Monsieur," said the peasant;" but the men b'ent the same at all."

" No, good man! and where's the difference? you are rather the oldest; but that is in your favor; you ought to have the more experience; and you have sons to assist you in the labor."

" Ah! Monsieur," rejoined the peasant, all that has nothing to do with the case; you know very well sir," (looking sly) you knows as well as I, one mayn't say such things."

" I dont know, indeed," returned the Baron, " nor can I divine why two fields,

only separated by a hedge, supposing the soil and culture the same, should not yield equally well? nor why you will not tell me your reasons, good man?"

"Why then, Monsieur, if I must speak," said the old man, "though it goes against me to speak ill of a neighbour, yet 'tis what every body knows, Guilloit deals with the devil, he is a wizard, Monsieur."

Monsieur De Montfier could not help smiling at this way of accounting for a neighbour's superiority.

"There are many sorts of devils, mon bon homme," said he, "now this devil of Guilloit's is certainly not an idle one; indeed, he appears to me to be such an understanding, industrious fellow, that I am inclined to take him into pay myself."

"Ah! Monsieur," said the old man,

scratching his venerable grey locks, "you may laugh; but all the parish knows, 'tis as I tell you, why, sir, the hail storm that did so much mischief last season, passed over Guilloit's fields without touching a blade of them, and when every body else's cattle has the distemper, his'n are sure to escape—when I ha'nt a wisp of straw for my poor beasts, he has hay in plenty, and when the wolf came awhile agone, and robbed every body's fold, he never touched a lamb of his; though they were the fattest in the parish. Monsieur, you may be sure that what I tell you is true, his father was a wizard, and his grandfather before him; and used to turn himself into all manner of things; and at last he was killed, in the shape of the form of a fox, as he was going off with a fat fowl of my grandfather's; and then the family hush'd it up like, and said as how he died of a *perplexity*; sir, there have been witches among them, from father to son, as long

as the oldest man can remember; 'tis as sure as you stands there."

A little further enquiry so well convinced Monsieur De Montfier, that the sorcery of Guilloit was superior industry and sagacity, that he took him into his own service, and gave him the superintendance of his farm; nor had he ever any reason to repent of his choice, for he proved an active, honest, and intelligent fellow; and a very able assistant in the Baron's plans of rural economy and improvement.

The reader may be assured that this step, in the first instance, confirmed the prejudice against Guilloit, and dubbed him more decidedly a wizard. Nevertheless his uniform good conduct, the respect the villagers could not refuse to the virtues of their landlord, and the confidence he appeared to place in his bailiff, had by degrees worn away the imputation,

and it was hardly remembered but by envy and malignity, devils, that neither the seclusion of Montfier, the piety of its Pastor, nor all the benevolence of the Seigneur, could totally exclude.

In a soil which afforded neither stones nor gravel, the Baron found it impossible to make the roads fit for wheel carriages. The breed of horses was likewise very indifferent; he therefore turned his attention to that of asses and horned cattle, both of which he succeeded to bring to great perfection, the former were become large, tractable, and even beautiful, they were easily taught their paces, and Clara and each of her brothers had one of their own.

As in countries subject to the nightly depredations of the Wolf, all the cattle but the oxen* must be housed every night,

* The instinct of these animals to preserve themselves from the attacks of the wolf, is a curious fact; they lay down in

each district is provided with large out-buildings for this purpose, and here in the winter season, the inhabitants male and female, assemble at night fall, bring their knitting and spinning, and spend their evenings together, warmed by the breath of the cattle, and cheared by the society of each other. It was Monsieur de Montfier's particular care, that these out-houses should be well thatched, and kept in good repair; and here, when the weather permitted, he would sometimes join the rustic assembly; bring his children and his violin; and spend a couple of hours, sometimes in instructing, sometimes in exhilirating its delighted members. Monsieur Du Plessis was often of the party, and far from being any restraint upon their artless merriment, no festival was ever expected with more eagerness, than an

pairs, head to tail, so that whichever way the enemy makes his approach, there is a horn-work for defence, to which he knows better than to expose himself.

evening when the company from the castle, was likely to attend at the barn. The old folks told their stories, and the young ones sung their songs, as freely as when there was no audience but themselves; if neither were elegant they were at least harmless, for they had been taught to reject every thing that had the least tendency to vice or immorality, long ere Clara was allowed to be witness of their mirth and their conversations, which were then become, if not polite, at least strictly decorous.

Clara was instructed not to disdain, to contribute to the entertainment of these humble assemblies. She would sing in her best manner to them, while her father accompanied her on the violin, and the good folks, still more delighted with their condescension, than with their performance, forgot their toils and difficulties, and received the instruction usually mingled with the song or the tale, as if it had been delivered by some tutelary angel.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHEVALIER DU PLESSIS.

The only stranger whose company could afford any relief to the solitude of Montfier, was the Chevalier Du Plessis, second son to the Marquis of that name, and nephew to the worthy Curé. He had been originally designed for the church, and educated chiefly by his uncle; when at college, he always spent his vacations with him, and the good man loved him as his son. The death of his elder brother inspired other views and measures. He found himself obliged, in conformity to the will of his father, and the established custom

to enter into the army, and give up, with his projects, his habits too. Nevertheless the impression of early education upon a disposition uncommonly good, was proof against the corruption, even of this dissolute school, and he remained steadily sober, regular, and virtuous, in spite of seductive influence and bad example.

Perhaps it may be necessary to inform the English reader, who has not been accustomed, to hear of public seminaries, as affording any asylum to youth against the irregularities to which it is so prone; that the education of such as are intended for the church in catholic countries, bears no resemblance to that of our universities; the discipline there is as rigid as here it is remiss; girls at a boarding-school are not more strictly confined, nor are their morals attended to with half such care; no drinking parties, no late hours, no lewd females permitted to beset their ways.

Such is the severity of the rules, that a youth has been expelled, only for having in his possession an indecent book.

Such had been the Chevalier's early education; naturally studious, he had so well profited of the opportunities afforded him for instruction, that he was always the first in his class. When obliged to change the object of his pursuit, he did not follow it up with less assiduity: he soon became a proficient in tactics, to which his knowledge of mathematics was a ready guide. The Chevalier's happy frame of mind while it retained all the sterling ore of his secluded education, soon threw off the dross: he was lively without being light, and easy, without the slightest tincture of conceit or forwardness; grateful to his uncle for his kindness, and attached to the spot where he had spent the careless and cheerful days of childhood, he usually contrived to escape from his father and his

avocations, at least once a year, and fly to the secluded village with the eagerness and delight with which others of his age hastened to dissipation and to Paris.

The pleasure his visits conferred, was not at all inferior to that he received, it was a season of general festivity; for his good humour, affability, and benevolence, made him a favorite in the cottage not less than at the castle. Monsieur Du Plessis loved him as his son, and the Baron hardly less—Clara had been his play-fellow fiom a child; she was attached to him as to a brother, and was yet to learn either to distrust or examine the nature of her regard for him.

Unavoidable affairs had delayed the Chevalier's visit for two years, when, one fine morning in the month of May, Theresa, coming as usual to attend upon her mis-

tress, could hardly bid her good morning, before she exclaimed:

"Oh! Mademoiselle, as I was up the east tower just now, with Monsieur, the little Chevalier, to see after his ball, I saw two such fine horses go by the end of the avenue, with such a fine man upon one of them, that if the King is not come, (and I don't know how he should find his way here, tho', to be sure, I have often heard Mademoiselle Fréron, talk of good King Henry's coming once when he was a hunting,) it must be the Chevalier Du Plessis!"

"Why, of the two," said Clara, "I think it is rather more likely to be the latter, with his servant La Roche; but sure you would have known *him*?"

"Not quite so sure, Mademoiselle, it was rather too far off—however I dont see why it should not be the king, we an't

above a hundred leagues from Paris, you know Mademoiselle, and what's that for a ride to come and see our village? perhaps he has heard of our feast, and might not know the exact time. Which had you rather it should be, Mademoiselle, the King, or the Chevalier Du Plessis?" said Therese, looking a little arch.

"Indeed, I don't know," answered Clara, without giving herself time to consider whether or not she spoke the exact truth.

At this period of the dialogue, a little voice was heard to exclaim;

"Sister, sister, make haste down, Basil is driving your young ducks into the water, and they will be drowned; make haste, make haste."

Clara obeyed the summons, and repaired to her brother in the poultry yard, she

found Isidore, the younger, exerting himself to save the little brood from the destruction he apprehended, and Basil smiling at his brother's simplicity, with an air of triumph and conscious superiority, such as people of very slender knowledge are so apt to assume.

"Teazing your brother is much worse than hunting my ducks, Basil," said Clara, "suppose you were to go and fetch me some buck wheat to feed the fowls; the best way to keep people out of mischief, is to keep them employed."

The child obeyed, while Isidore was sent another way for a basket to collect the eggs. Clara having inspected her small domain, repaired to her flower garden, where she spent half an hour in admiring and arranging its beauties; she then returned to her apartment, summoned her brothers, and heard them repeat their les-

sons; till, at eight o'clock, the bell rang for breakfast, which at this time of the year was usually taken in Clara's sitting room, which opened, as we have already said, upon the flower garden—here the Baron joined his children, who all ran eagerly to embrace and bid him good morrow.

They were busy over their brown bread, new churned butter, strawberries and milk, when Antoine opened the door, and announced the Chevalier Du Plessis; the stranger entered, and received from the Baron the most cordial welcome. The boys were at first a little shy, and Clara, curtseying and blushing, as she gave her hand to his respectful salute, for the first time, endeavoured, unconscious to herself, to conceal the pleasure she felt from his arrival.

Two years had made but little alteration in the person of the Chevalier; that

little was, however, to his advantage; his carriage had acquired more ease and grace, he was browner, ruddier, and somewhat fuller; but the improvement in Clara was so striking, that the Chevalier could not conceal his pleasure and surprize.

"How Mademoiselle, your daughter, is grown, Monsieur," said he to the Baron, "how she is improved! when I last saw her I could not have formed an idea of any alteration to her advantage:—my little play-mates too! I should scarce have known them; and they look as strange as if they did not know me at all. Come hither, Basil, my old friend," taking the child upon kis knee, "ar't still bent upon being a soldier? I have brought thee arms complete from Paris."

"What! a sword and a gun, and a drum," said Basil, "where are they? have you got them in your pocket?"

"La Roche will bring them when he has unpacked my things, my dear friend," said the Chevalier; "never fear, you shall speedily be equipped, and go with me to the wars."

"I have a bow and arrow, that Antoine made for me," said the youngest child, "better by half than all that."

"Have you indeed? *mon petit bon homme*," said the Chevalier, caressing him; "did'st think I had forgotten thee? no, indeed, I have a famous English horse for my friend Isidore, that will stand fire, and never run away."

"Antoine, shall make you a bow and arrow," said the child, "to kill the English, for he says, they are a wicked people; and the wolves too, and the hawks and the magpies, that steal sister's chicken."

The Chevalier then related the circumstances of his arrival; he had lodged the over night at a cottage on the road, being too considerate to overstrain his horses; and having found, when he came to his uncle's, that the good man had just been called out to visit a sick person, and was not likely to return very soon, he had availed himself of the circumstance to come and breakfast with his good friend the Baron, and deliver some letters, of which he was the bearer, from his sister, the Countess De Blanville, at Paris.

The repast was not brief, for on both sides, numerous were the questions to be asked, and to be resolved. Every trifle is interesting to friends that have been long asunder, and to the Chevalier no individual of Montfier was indifferent; no animal he had ever seen was forgotten; even the trees and plants, as old acquaintance, if not friends, were endeared to him.

After breakfast, the gentlemen walked together to the presbytery, where Monsieur Du Plessis was returned, and eagerly expecting his nephew; he readily accepted the Baron's invitation to return with him to dinner, and the families spent the day with mutual satisfaction.

The Chevalier's presents were unpacked, and brought to the castle; among them was an elegant English pocket-book, with instruments complete, with which he requested leave of the Baron to present his daughter, this was readily obtained; and Clara very soon after found a pretence to retire to her apartment, in order to admire her present at leisure, and show it to the housekeeper and the waiting woman.

"Oh! the beautiful present!" exclaimed Therese, "what charming scissars, they shine like silver, and then the knife,

and the bodkin, and such a quantity of needles!"

"A number of sharp instruments, indeed," said Mademoiselle Fréron, with great gravity, "it is very unlucky Mademoiselle."

"Unlucky, indeed," said Therese, "to receive a fine present from a handsome young gentleman! — May I never have any *worse* luck! say I, nor Mademoiselle neither!"

"The Chevalier was always a good natured gentleman, and when he had nothing else to give, he used to give Mademoiselle his uncle's flowers—la! don't you remember what a piece o' to do there was about those fine flowers, that came from, I don't know where, that Monsieur, the Curé, kept for seed; but the poor Chevalier, thought for his part, that he could do nothing

better with them than offer them to Mademoiselle. Oh! I shall never forget once, that he was climbing the mulberry-tree, to get some fruit, and the branch broke and let him down; his face and hands, were all over smeared with the juice, and we thought 'twas blood; how pale Mademoiselle looked, and how I screamed!" here she laughed immoderately: "I am sure I never was so frightened in my life, nor Mademoiselle neither."

"A little matter frightens you, Therese," said Mademoiselle Freron, "or pleases you, or sets you a chattering; but light things are easily moved."

"True, Mademoiselle," said Therese, "but, I protest, yonder comes La Roche, he is a little lighter than he used to be when he followed the plough at farmer Guéret's, with his wooden shoes plaistered all over with clay: we shall see if he is

easily moved. I wonder what he has brought us from Paris."

Therese then hastened to be present at the arrival of La Roche, whom she nevertheless affected to receive with great indifference. He was a good-natured, merry fellow, and had brought with him all his usual spirits, besides toys for the maids, new songs, and country dances for every body. Therese was not forgotten; and the kitchen was no less enlivened by the arrival of the strangers, than the parlor.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CURÉ,

MONSIEUR DU PLESSIS.

A Few days after the arrival of the Chevalier, a poor woman brought Monsieur Du Plessis a present of wood strawberries, and desired to see him. His housekeeper, Madame Du Lot, told her he was busy; but he happened to be within hearing, and instantly made his appearance.

" What is your pleasure, my good mother," said he, " is all your family well?"

" So, so, Monsieur," answered the woman, whose name was La Cloche, " as well as poor folks can be, these hard times; here's my grandson, little Pierrot, and I, we have been all this blessed day in the woods picking strawberries for you, here they are, a fine parcel; do us the honor to accept them, Monsieur Le Curé? I might have taken them to the castle, when I should have been sure of being well paid for my trouble; but I rather chose to bring them to you, Monsieur, for I a'nt at all mercenary."

" Thank you, my good woman," said Monsieur Du Plessis, " here is, for your trouble; and Madame Du Lot will give you some victuals and wine; sit you down, and rest yourselves, you and your grandson. How old is the little fellow? almost fit to be a farmer?—what say you, my brave boy, should you like to go to plough?"

"Lord love you, Monsieur," said La Cloche, answering for the child, "he is but five years old, though so stout, and then he is of great use to me, and leads me about, I could not tell how to spare him yet, Monsieur Le Curé."

Monsieur Du Plessis, patted the child on the head, bade him be a good boy, wished the old woman a good day, repeated his orders for their entertainment, and was going out.

"Why, Monsieur," said his housekeeper, impatiently following him, "you never eat strawberries, besides Goody La Cloche, has brought you rubbish, that she has been collecting this week; and is only fit for the pigs: you have overpaid her already; there's nothing to give her,—nothing in the world, but what's for your own supper."

"'Tis all one, Madame," answered the Curé, "I desire that the good woman may not be mortified with having her present depreciated—they give a great deal, who give their best; remember the widow's mite, Madame; and pray, let La Cloche, and her little grandson, be well entertained; I choose to have the strawberries for my supper; let her have something of it instead."

"And what, in their stead?" answered, eagerly Madame Du Lot, "the fowl, pray? or the ragout? or the creams that I have been at such pains to prepare myself for you? there's no cold meat in the house, nor any thing at all for such as *she!* Monsieur, your nephew, will be highly gratified, I dare say, when he comes home, hungry from his ride, to find half the supper gone, to feed the old cant, that brings you mouldy strawberries."

"My nephew is neither selfish nor difficult, Madame," answered mildly the Curé, "he will be as well pleased as I, that poor La Cloche, should have a good supper. It is a blessed thing, Madame, to give to those that can make no return, it is imitating our heavenly father."

"You have too many of such customers, Monsieur Le Curé," said the housekeeper; "what with beggars, and what with borrowers, and what is the worst of all, such givers as these, you will very soon have nothing for yourself—look at your cassock, is it fit to be seen for a gentleman?—Susan and I work our fingers to the bone, to spin you linen, and you give it half away: you should consider, Monsieur Le Curé,"

"I do consider, my good lady," said her master, "I consider, that I am here, but as a stranger and a traveller; that it is in

vain to lay up treasures where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: I would lay them up where I shall be sure to find them hereafter.

"'Tis fine talking," answered Madame Du Lot, "but I, for my part, have children; and as they are to live here in this world, in the first place, I should be glad to have the where-withal; *you* have no children to hoe for, Monsieur Le Curé."

"I have more than you, Madame," answered he, "I consider all my parishioners in that light; and I trust in a good providence both for mine and your's. I would neglect no prudent precaution, Madame, but a supper to poor La Cloche and her little grandson, can never hurt us, therefore pray let her have it; only that I would wish her to suppose that I ate of the strawberries, which, I dare say, would give her as much pleasure as the

best fare in the world, I would go myself and sup at the castle."

"I beg you would do no such thing, Monsieur Le Curé," said the housekeeper, "when I have been at the trouble of making the ragout myself, on purpose to please you!"

"I thank you for your attention, Madame," replied her master; "in that case I certainly shall stay at home to eat of it."

Soon after one of the parish, named Simon, enquired for Monsieur the Curé.

"My wife is ill, Monsieur," said the man, "will you have the goodness to come and see her?"

"What is her complaint, good man Simon?" enquired the Curé; "Have you consulted a physician?"

" No, Monsieur," answered the man, " I have been obliged to send for the doctor two or three times for my cow, and I can't afford to have one for my wife; besides, she is always talking of death, so I thought it was of no use; but that I had better come for you, Monsieur."

" I will go instantly," said Monsieur Du Plessis; " if you are returning we'll walk together."

" Your wife was at church, on Sunday," said the Curé, as they went along: " I am rather surprized she should be dangerously ill, and I not have heard of it."

" Why, the truth of the case is, Sir," said Simon, " she's a little bit fanciful: I don't know that there's any great matter of danger—or in the way she goes on, if it *mattered* though there were: she does no earthly thing, Monsieur Le Curé: if

my cow has been sick, 'tis all owing to *she*, all along with her neglect. You know she was waiting woman to our late Madame, before Mademoiselle Fréron, Lord help us, she was not fit for a poor man's wife: she does nothing half her time, and wants to be waited on; and then, if there's the least matter of hurry, or any thing to do more than common, she's sick, and she's going to die—no, Monsieur, I don't see that she's in any danger."

About a mile's walk brought them to the cottage, where they found the poor woman very much wrapt up, and rocking herself by the fire side, though the evening was warm.

" What is the matter, Madame Simon?" said the Curé, taking a chair beside her, " I am sorry to hear you are so ill."

"I am very ill indeed, Monsieur," answered the woman, "I don't expect to live till morning."

Monsieur Du Plessis, whom, experience and attention no less than necessity, had made a physician not unskilful in common complaints, felt her pulse, and questioned her more particularly; and convinced by all he observed, that her disease was rather of the mind than the body, he endeavoured to administer to that.

"It is well to think of death, my good friend," said he, "in order to prepare for it, but it is wrong to think of nothing else, especially when it gives such horror, as you appear to have conceived of it. The best preparative for death, is a pious, regular, and, let me add, an active life. You are sensible we all must die; if the day be ever so remote, it needs must

come, and nature will as certainly be averse to it; let us learn to think of it, as an unavoidable thing; but let us think of it without terror: do not fix your ideas upon the grave; that part of you that is to be consigned to its gloomy imprisonment will be wholly unconscious of its dwelling. Look beyond, my good friend, look to that place, where faith, hope, and resignation will conduct your immortal soul.—We are always to be prepared for death, because we know not the day nor the hour; but we are not to be terrified, nor to give ourselves up to weak apprehensions, which make us suffer a thousand deaths for one. Cheer up, my good woman, shake off your low spirits, go and take the air in your garden, exert yourself, bustle about your family business, be always employed; and trust me you will get the better of your disorder, and live many years a comfort to yourself and your children."

" Ah! my poor son, my dear Henriot," exclaimed the good woman, " I shall never see him more!"

" Be comforted, my good mother!" resumed Monsieur Du Plessis, " your son will return, sooner or later, and in the mean time, prepare yourself for the worst, look upon him as dead, and cease to lament him. — You have other children, who have never given you any subject for regret, it is unjust to them to be taken up entirely with the absent and the unworthy."

The son, which Madame Simon lamented so much, was her first born, and her favorite; he had quitted his family now about two years; and no intelligence whatever, had been received of him since. He was a fine youth, perfectly well made, and particularly active and adroit: he excelled in all exercises, where bodily strength

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and agility could avail; nor was he deficient in mental endowments; he was quick of apprehension, fluent in expression, had much ingenuity, invention, and contrivance; but his extraordinary vivacity rendering application of any kind irksome to him, all his brilliant endowments remained unimproved; insomuch that at the school, which Monsieur Du Plessis had established, and where he himself presided, he was continually surpassed by lads of less than half his natural abilities. He was naturally frank and sincere, and not deficient in humanity, or even in generosity; but the vivacity, we have already noticed, almost turned his best qualities to vice, by continually hurrying him to some unjustifiable excess; he was proud, vindictive, and irascible, prone to take offence, and implacable when offended, a zealous friend, and a most inveterate enemy; while his friendship or his enmity were alike lightly taken up and slightly found-

ed; he would be grateful to excess, for a trifling compliance with his humour, while he would forget; and even sometimes resent, the most essential services; thus, he took a pique against Monsieur Du Plessis for some kind and well meant reproof; and a still greater to the Baron for some preference given to Louisot Guilloit, the son of his bailiff, though he could not but own it just. In consequence of this decision, he quarrelled with the latter, after having been upon terms of the strictest intimacy with him, divided the village into party feuds, was continually fomenting jealousies and discontent; in short, was so obnoxious to the general peace, that when his departure was known, his mother, and a young girl whose affections he had engaged, were the only persons to lament him. Both these, however, lamented him indeed, and the health of both had suffered in consequence. His mother, particnlarly, had given herself up to me-

lancholy and indolence, and was truly a pitiable object.

Monsieur Du Plessis did not fail going to see his patient the following day, to witness the effect of his admonition; he had the satisfaction to find it had not been thrown away; the good woman was more composed, and was endeavouring to employ herself about her domestic affairs. On his return he met one of the peasants' wives: she accosted him; and in his usual kind manner, he enquired after the health of her family.

"My danghter goes on pretty well, considering what a bad time she had, Monsieur," answered the good woman; "but, Lord help us, she would do still better, if she could fare better; she don't get strength, and how should she, with a great lusty boy sucking her to death,

and nothing but cabbage soup to nou rish her?"

"Come with me, my good woman," said the Curé, "and let us see what my larder affords."

She readily complied, and followed Monsieur Du Plessis, who went softly to his pantry; for he was rather afraid of the opposition of his housekeeper, if he intermeddled in her department; luckily, she was not in the way, and there was a fine fowl ready for the spit; he wrapt it up in the first thing that came to hand, which happened to be one of his best napkins, gave it to the woman, and hurried her away; for he was as apprehensive of being detected in the fact, as if he had committed a robbery. He had but just time to make good his retreat, when Madame Du Lot arrived to see about the supper; she ordered the cook to roast the fowl that was in the pantry,

and would not believe the girl when she affirmed, there was no fowl there. The cat was accused, the Chevalier's dogs, in short, every thief but the right; it was on a Thursday, and consequently previons to days of meagre fare; and Madame Du Lot, being far too good a manager to have any thing to replace the vanished dish, was at the end of her wits and her patience: in the mean time, the supper hour and the gentlemen arrived punctually together. The Chevalier, who had been shooting, complained of hunger, and seated himself at table: Madame Du Lot introduced the supper with the empty dish which was to have contained the fowl.

"I never can turn my back an in stant, Monsieur Le Curé," said she, "but every thing goes wrong, the victuals are spoiled or walk away; I never knew any thing toequal it.—I had the finest *poularde* of my own fatting that ever was seen,

and thought to have given you quite a treat; and lo! and behold, it is gone, and nobody knows how or which way."

" Don't fret, Madame," said her master, " the fowl is gone to those that want it; here is an exceeding good supper, we shall do very well without it."

" So, you have given it away, and the fine napkin I miss, along with it, I warrant; indeed, Monsieur Le Curé, you are quite insupportable; you never care for yourself I know, but I wish you would be so good as to think a little of me; charity begins at home, Monsieur Le Curé, I should have been glad to have picked a bit of fowl myself; you know I have a poor stomach."

" Come, come, Madame," said the good man, " you can have fowl when you please; I gave it to those that cannot."

"Who did you give it to, Monsieur?—I only wish to know that. I met Jerome's wife, with something hugged up under her arm; I do suppose, it was my fowl, and my napkin; you are always imposed upon, Monsieur Le Curé, and you always will be, because you can't condescend to ask my advice; you'll excuse me, bnt there are things I know a vast deal better than you."

"Make the sallad, Chevalier," said the Curé, "let us try for once to sup upon that and our cold meat, and comfort ourselves that some poor people, who are not often regaled, fare better."

"I am too hungry to be dainty, my dear uncle," said the Chevalier; "much good may the fowl do the poor people who have it; I have the sauce."

The Curé called for a bottle of his best wine and finished it with his nephew,

except a large glass that he sent to Madame Du Lot, to make amends for the portion of fowl that might have fallen to her share; he was quite gay over his glass, and never mirth was more cordial.

"Poor Madame Du Lot was in a sad taking," said the Chevalier; "it is a mortifying thing to a housekeeper to have the economy of her table deranged; but that is all the harm: I have snpped as well for my part, as if I had had a *poularde* to my own share."

"I am sorry she should be vexed," said the Curé. "I avoid thwarting her as much as I can, but upon some occasions it is impossible. Come, my dear Chevalier, take another glass; I am only sorry I did not think of giving the poor woman a bottle of wine to wash down the fowl."

CHAPTER V.

THERESE.

As soon as Clara heard of the indisposition of Madame Simon, she dispatched her maid, to enquire after her health, and to carry her some better wine, than the sick person's own stock could be supposed to afford. Therese acquitted herself of her commission, with great alacrity; tarrying a little longer in chat, than perhaps was strictly necessary; but as she thereby diverted the invalid from a sense of her

suffering, it was acting up to the spirit, if not to the letter, of her orders; and certainly better than adopting, as is too common, the contrary mode of proceeding.

"Mademoiselle Therese is *so* amiable," said the patient, "it is not possible to be dull in her company."

Therese, who never failed to entertain herself at least as much as other people, tripped away as light as a fawn: she would speedily have recovered the time lost in gossipping; but she took it into her head to return through a part of the forest, which, although somewhat out of her own road, was in that from the presbytery; wisely calculating, though perhaps, she had never heard the proverb, that the farthest way about was the nearest way home.

"Who knows?" thought she, "perhaps I may meet with a spark."

Therese had a pretty good guess the Chevalier was expected at the Castle, and La Roche, of course, would attend; thus, instead of hurrying through these gloomy solitudes, so little congenial to her lively disposition, she threw herself on a bank a little out of sight of the path, but by no means out of hearing; and began singing, as a distant footstep advanced, the well-known French song, *Mon honneur dit*, which may be thus put into English.

SONG.

No, I would ne'er one step advance to greet him,
Too dear I hold a virgin's tender fame;
Yet here, methinks, if I should chance to meet him,
Tho' I should tarry, there could be no blame.

On this green bank of mossy verdure lying,
Anxious, I list to ev'ry fleeting sound;
Now hear his voice among the zephyrs sighing,
Now, his light step along the hollow ground.

Damon, dear name, for ever I'm repeating,
  Ever the burthen of my secret song;
Damon, dear name, at which my heart is beating,
  Singing or saying still the whole day long.

Sweet 'tis to hear it, to pronounce it sweeter;
  Yet, should some neighbour listen to my lay:
Hush then my song, be silent, be discreeter,
  What I may think, ah! never let me say.

At the conclusion of the last stanza, Monsieur La Roche made his appearance; but the fair songstress, affecting the most interesting confusion, rushed by him into the path, and could by no means be prevailed upon to accept the assistance of his arm.

"There is then, a happy man, Mademoiselle, who is the subject of your cogitations," said La Roche; "how I envy him, though I have perhaps deprived him of the pleasure of escorting you through the wood. You would not have been so cruel to him."

"I am always cruel in a wood, Monsieur," said Therese. "It is the only way to be safe there; for if you observe, every creature in it, that does not devour, is liable to be devoured; now, whether the wolf has two legs or four, I choose to keep clear of him. Hold off!" continued she, as he was approaching her. "Keep your distance, if you come near I shall snap; I had rather be the eater than the eaten."—Therese tripped on a smart pace.

As they quitted the wood, Louisot appeared in sight, penning his fold in an adjoining field. Now Louisot was the eldest son of that Guillorit, whose prudence and good conduct had formerly procured him the reputation of a wizard. All Guillorit's children were more or less handsome and intelligent, and Louisot was the handsomest and the most intelligent of them all. As he seemed wholly taken up with his business, Therese called after him.

"Why how now Louisot? how churlish you become! would you really pass me by without speaking?"

"I beg yonr pardon, Mademoiselle," said he; "I had business; besides, I see you are engaged."

"Not at all engaged," answered she briskly," I am never engaged to be with one; it is equally dangerous and disagreeable; not only I am not so engaged, but I never mean to be."

"It is to be hoped you will alter your mind, Mademoiselle," said Louisot.

"Oh! I alter my mind continually," she replied, "but myself I never mean to alter; don't you think I am very well as I am?"

"You are very charming, indeed, Mademoiselle," replied Louisot, "it were a great pity that you should alter."

"Mademoiselle does great credit to the village of Montfier," said La Roche; "Paris itself could hardly produce a more finished coquette."

"I suppose," said Therese, "that is a Paris compliment; I am sure Louisot would not have said such a thing."

"Louisot seems to be the fashion to day, said La Roche; well, it may be my turn another time; *bon jour*, Mademoiselle," added he, stalking off.

"I am sorry I cannot attend you home, Mademoiselle," said Louisot, "but I *must* see to my fold; look, they are straggling already; here Pastor, Pastor," calling his dog, "I wish you a good day, Mademoiselle."

Therese, having thus lost both her beaux, as it sometimes happens with coquettes who play the same game, if she

was at all mortified, took care not to own it even to herself; she tripped on as before, singing, to keep herself company, all the liveliest airs she could recollect.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ALARM.

About a mile from the Castle, and just within the inclosure of the forest, there was a chapel, on the spot where an ancestor of the Baron's had been killed by a wild boar; and here every year, on the anniversary of the accident, a solemn service was usually celebrated for the repose of his soul.

At the late Baroness's request, this oratory had been repaired and beautified, and inscribed to her patroness, St. Clara; and as she had a particular satisfaction in

resorting thither to perform her devotions, the walk leading to it from the Castle had been planted with trees, and improved with the utmost care, by her husband.

Clara who had been accustomed from her infancy to attend her mother in these pious exercises, had not relinquished the practice; she often resorted to the chapel of St. Clara, where she took a melancholy pleasure in offering up prayers for her deceased parent, and in shedding tears to her memory.

Rising one lovely morning with the sun, she took her way, as she had often done before quite as early, through the covered walk, ringing with the music of ten thousand choristers, to pay her morning devotions at her favourite oratory; she joined, as she walked, the matin hymn of the aerial songsters; and with a voice not less sweet, and a heart full as innocent, sung as follows:

MORNING HYMN.

O! sweet reviving nature,
Intranc'd I see thy face,
And feel the genial breezes
My slackened sinews brace.

The tender blade is springing
And covering the ground,
The lonely forest ringing,
With shrill, melodious sound.

Thy bounteous hand, oh! Father,
These blessings does renew,
And spreads the earth with verdure,
And nourishes with dew.

The lambs in pasture leaping,
For man by thee are fed!
The lowli'st insect creeping,
For some good end was made.

When from the vault of heav'n,
The sun illumes our fields,
Reanimated nature
A grateful tribute yields.

The leaves their buds are bursting,
The flowers their sweets exhale,
The winged people clust'ring,
Their great Creator hail.

The meadows gay with flowers,
A living altar raise,
And join the youthful season
In offerings of praise

The flowers to their Creator,
Their fragrant incense pay;
The melody of nature
Proclaims him all the day.

The tuneful lark ascending,
Fatigues my aching sight,
In vain mine eye would reach her,
My soul outstrips her flight.

My praises shall o'ertake her,
With votive offering,
To our almighty Maker,
The Author of the spring.

Oh praise with exultation,
The Giver of all joy
The Father of creation,
Who made and can destroy;

From this earth-spotted ocean,
Above the spangled skies,
On pinions of devotion,
Let thanks and praises rise.

Clara's hymn, with some repetitions, lasted until she reached the oratory; she threw herself on her knees before the altar, and had been some time engaged in fervent prayer, when the sudden overshadowing of a side window, caused her to raise her eyes that way, and with unspeakable alarm, she beheld the countenance of a very fierce-looking man, earnestly gazing at her through it. She viewed this terrible apparition for an instant, with mingled horror and surprise, then hastily turning from the sight, reclined her head upon her desk in an agitation, which, for some minutes, deprived her of the power of reflection; a little recovered, she stole a side-long glance at the vision, and was too well convinced of its reality.

The window was too much elevated from the ground for the tallest person to be able to see through it, without some thing to raise them. Clara thought of her solitude, of her helplessness, of the strange and ferocious countenance of her rude observer; and her devotion increased with her fears. When we see no help but from Heaven, we are all ready enough to seek it there; Clara, accustomed to do so in all cases, thought herself safer within the sanctuary of the chapel, than in quitting it, to endeavour to escape; she continued her prayer, as well as her perturbation would allow, now and then stealing a timorous glance at the tremendous apparition, whose rugged features, seeming to soften into something like complacency in beholding her, still increased her alarm. Clara had continued some minutes in this cruel state, which appeared to her like so many hours, when, venturing once again to look towards the window, she had the

satisfaction to find her persecutor had disappeared; she had hardly time to congratulate herself when she heard the door open behind her; she started up, and screaming aloud, ran towards the altar; sinking before it, she stretched out her arms in an attitude of distress and imploring, that must have softened any human heart:—how unspeakable was her relief, at recognizing the voice of the Chevalier!

"I beg you ten thousand pardons, Mademoiselle," said he, "for thus alarming you. Yet sure!" continued he, as he approached and observed the terror painted in her countenance, "it could not be me!"

Clara pointed to the window.

"Oh, Chevalier," she exclaimed, "from what a state have you relieved me; what good angel has brought you hither?"

"The best of all good angels," returned he; "one that always leads to you."

Clara related the circumstances that had so alarmed her, and requested the Chevalier to conduct her home; his surprise was not less than her's: he shuddered at the danger to which she had been exposed, alone and unprotected, in such a solitude, and blessed a thousand times the pious impulse, which had led him to pay his morning orisons at the chapel.

"It was certainly my approach that alarmed the ruffian," said he; "my dog ran before and barked, but I had no idea that it was at any thing human—Oh! Mademoiselle, how happy am I! how have my good intentions been rewarded—Will you venture, under my protection, to take a survey round the chapel?"

Clara, quite recovered from her affright, readily consented; and they walked round

the building together. By the window from which she had seen the terrible countenance, a way was broken through the underwood, and the marks of a horse's hoofs were even discernible on the damp earth beneath; hence it appeared, that the person, whoever he was, was mounted on horseback, and thus enabled to reach the windows; so far was clear, but the rest was wholly inexplicable. It was so very unusual for any stranger to intrude upon these solitudes, that the appearance of one, without any other circumstance, would, alone, have given rise to many conjectures; what then could be thought of this rude interrupter of a fair lady's devotions? Whence could he come? What could he be? How should he find his way hither?

Surmises of this kind supplied an ample fund for conversation during the walk to the castle, and at the breakfast table there.

The Baron, more shocked than he chose to avow, pressed the Chevalier's hand affectionately; and charged his daughter not to go out unattended, till this strange adventure had been satisfactorily explained. Antoine bringing in the coffee, caught a part of the tale of wonder, and with the familiarity, which on account of his long services, the Baron tolerated, or perhaps hardly perceived; questioned his young mistress, till he was informed of the whole; it lost nothing in his conveyance to the kitchen; and before evening it had travelled, like a whirlwind, gathering in its way, to the remotest extremity of the village. Therese, who not unfrequently attended her young lady in her pious visits to the oratory, was in despair, at being left out of such a notable adventure; the only consoling circumstance to her, was, the opinion of Mademoiselle Fréron, who asserted, with that confidence that often supplies the place of proof and argument,

that the countenance which had so alarmed Mademoiselle Clara, was not that of a man, but of the devil himself, who had assumed such an appearance, in order to terrify her from her devotions.

"Yet, to be sure," said Therese, "I had rather see the frightfullest man in the world than the devil; although one might be a little curious too, to know if he is like the pictures they make of him."

The opinion of the housekeeper was very much to the taste of the villagers; who were often reduced to invent or imagine wonders, for want of events in the common course of nature; she was moreover a personage of great importance; and favorite doctrines, when thus supported by an authority that was respected, were of course doubly welcome. The Baron, however, as it now and then happened in other points, was not in this exactly of

the opinion of his housekeeper; he thought it expedient to set on foot the most rigorous researches, and most exact enquiries, relative to the appearance of any stranger in the vicinage; every avenue to the chapel underwent a most exact and minute investigation; yet, in spite of all his care and precaution, the affair continued long an inexplicable mystery.

CHAPTER VII.

A GREATER ALARM,

OR,

A MELANCHOLY TERMINATION TO MIRTH.

It was now the 13th of May, and the feast of St. Isidore, which being the little Chevalier's, that is, the Baron's second son's fête, or name-day, was observed in honour of him, as birth-days are in England. After vespers, the villagers assembled to dance on the lawn before the castle, and were entertained with a supper in the great hall.

The presence of the Chevalier Du Plessis contributed not a little to enliven the

feast; although he danced chiefly with Clara, he did not fail to lead out the village lasses in their turn. La Roche, too, distinguished himself; he had contrived to take a few lessons of dancing at Paris, and was almost of as much consequence as his master in this rustic assembly.

Among the rural belles, the first in personal charms, was indisputably Laurette; she was the eldest daughter of Guilloit, the Bailiff, whose son, Louisot, has already been noticed as a handsome youth—her beauty was of that kind which is most attractive to the French; that is, her eyes were very large, her mouth particularly small, her nose a little turned up; and she had enough of the rose in her complexion, to atone for the want of the lily; she was tall and well formed—in short, a lovely *brune*, and the toast of the village.

Suson, the miller's daughter, was allowed to be the best dancer; she was an active,

industrious, young woman, and not unengaging, although her beauty was nothing more than what the French call *la beauté du diable*, meaning the bloom of youth.

Florette, daughter to the shepherd La Grange, was an interesting girl, probably the more so from an air of melancholy, which had been observed to grow upon her ever since the departure of Henriot. But Clara's attendant Therese was, perhaps, the most attractive of all; archness sparkled in her expressive black eye, and good humour played in a thousand dimples about her pretty mouth; her beauty was what the French call *picquante*, and the harmless airs she gave herself, still more so.

Louisot was, by far, the finest youth in the village; he had an excellent understanding, was uncommonly active and adroit, and, withal, so modest and unassuming that his superiority was forgiven

him; and though distinguished by the women, he was not hated by the men: upon this occasion he experienced a rebuff, that was quite new to him; having presumed to offer himself as a partner to Mademoiselle Therese, the coquette elated with having just before been taken out by the Chevalier, refused him disdainfully; and the poor youth, totally abashed, was retiring with a fallen countenance from the set. Clara, whose eye was upon all the company, and whose delight it was to see every one happy, quickly discovered that Louisot was not so; "Why are you not dancing?" she enquired.

"I am not worthy," replied the youth, deeply blushing, and inadvertently glancing at Therese, "I have no right to dance in such good company."

"How so, Louisot?" returned Clara, and guessing the case, she added—"Has any

one refused you?—Come, I will set them an example, I am just now disengaged, you shall dance with me."

Louisot acknowledged the honor timidly, but not ungracefully; and speedily recovering from an humiliation so amply compensated, he acquitted himself in the dance almost as well as Monsieur La Roche.

Monsieur De Montfier, who till now had been only a spectator, observing that Jeannette Du Lot, a girl of no very prepossessing exterior, was frequently left out of the set, and that she looked dejected, offered her his hand.

"Nobody takes us out, Jeannette," said he; "I am too old, I suppose; but why you are left out is not quite so clear: Come, let us see what we poor neglected folks can do together."

The fallen countenance of Jeannette brightened up at this unexpected honor; she thought herself the queen of the feast, and made up in vivacity what she wanted in grace: Isidore was then set to dance with her, afterwards his brother, and she wanted partners no more.

The Chevalier whispered the Baron, as he led his clumsy partner along, that he had not chosen the handsomest.

" No, Chevalier," he replied, " I have taken the most neglected; I have often done so in my youthful days, and sometimes found it answer."

Monsieur Du Plessis's housekeeper, who was Jeannette's mother, was perhaps, of the two, the most delighted with the distinction paid the latter.

" You see, Mademoiselle," said she to the housekeeper of the castle, who was

sitting near her, "that it is not always beauty that takes, for, to be sure, my Jeannette, is not quite so handsome as Laurette, nor so light and lively as Suson; yet our good *Seigneur* never thought of dancing with either of them; nor with any one else but my Jeannette — yes, the girl has a certain *je ne scai quoi*, I always said so, far before beauty.—Ah! there, do you see? now Monsieur the little Chevalier is dancing with her; and next, I dare to say, Monsieur the Chevalier du Plessis will; and perhaps Monsieur La Roche—Ah! 'tis who shall have her now; and there sits Laurette, and looks quite neglected; she, truly, must give herself airs, and refuse her equals, like Mademoiselle Therese, because Monsieur the Chevalier had danced with her: but our good Seigneur never asked she—well, he's a fine man, and I never saw him look half so well as when he was dancing with my Jeannette."

"I believe," said Mademoiselle Freron, "that Monsieur the Baron took out your daughter because nobody else did; and from seeing her neglected through no fault of her own; for, as to her being a little homely or so, as the man said by the blind horse, that is her misfortune and not her fault; and he leaves the other girls to take their chance because they give themselves airs; so your Jeannette had best to take care, how she does the same."

The dancing broke up at an early hour; and in the interval before supper, the younger part of the company engaged at hide and seek. Jeannette, elated with the notice bestowed upon her for the first time, and roused from her usual indolence, ran about the gayest and the giddiest of them all; after tiring out most of the company, she challenged the Chevalier; saying, "Ah! Monsieur the Chevalier, you shall not find me this time!"

He followed her a little, but soon perceiving game more attractive, gave up the chace, and left poor Jeannette to seek what covert she would, unmolested. The company were all seated at supper, before it was observed that she was missing; nor did the absence of so insignificant a part of it, for some time give any uneasiness to the rest; the guests had, in general, good spirits and appetites; and if Jeannette's absence was mentioned at all, it was merely to laugh at her expence, and the disappointment she was supposed to endure, waiting and supperless, alone in her hiding place, while the company were so much better engaged than in seeking for her. Even her mother, Madame Du Lot, dispatched her supper very composedly, before she reflected how unlikely her daughter was, wilfully to absent herself from so agreeable a part of the entertainment; the reflection, however late,

came at last; and alarm succeeding to surprize, soon reached the ears of the master, who immediately directed that search should be made after the person so strangely missing.

The servants were dispatched all over the habitable part of the castle in vain; others were then sent to her home, in the idea that she might perhaps have retired thither; and these proving equally unsuccessful, it was thought expedient to search the uninhabited part of the castle, whither she might have wandered, and have lost herself:—to this effect, lanterns and torches were immediately procured; and the greatest part of the company following, with the Baron, the Chevalier, Antoine, and Guilloit the elder, at their head, engaged in the pursuit with mingled terror and curiosity; for to enter at night these dreary ruins, was considered as an enter-

prize of great temerity; nevertheless some of those, who were afraid to go, were still more afraid to stay, in the absence of the heads of the family.

The party advanced in close phalanx, first over the ground floor, most of them anxiously avoiding, as much as possible, to be either of the front or the rear guard. After exploring various desolate apartments, and "passages that led to nothing," Marion, the stout cook maid, happening very unaccountably to be one of the lattermost, stumbled as she reached the turning that led through a spacious arched room by the vault, and inadvertently opening her eyes, which before she had kept carefullv closed, depending for guidance on those before her; she saw, or imagined she saw, a gigantic shadow glide, with the rapidity of lightning, towards the vaults—"Jesu! Maria!" exclaimed the affrighted

cook, pressing violently forward, and again closing her eyes." Oh! what a terrible apparition!" "Marion has seen a ghost!" was echoed from all quarters, and the utmost confusion ensued, some pressing forward, others endeavouring to return; and in the midst of the dismay, a quantity of bats disturbed in their recess, and not less alarmed than their assailants, flew wildly towards the torches, and extinguished them all.

To the heated imaginations of the terrified villagers, the harmless animals appeared evil spirits, and had they really been so, the general alarm could not have been greater; some screamed, some prayed, some sunk on the ground in great danger of being trampled upon; for the light of the lanterns was only "darkness visible;" and it was some time ere the united authorities of the Seigneur and the Curé could

procure any attention to their directions. Guilloit, who had experienced in the management of his cattle, that the greater fear usually overcame the less, threatened to knock down such as would not be quiet and silent, and thus obtained a hearing for his master.

To dismiss this useless and timorous band, whose fears and numbers only impeded the progress of the others, was the next point to be gained; and for this it was settled that the Baron and Monsieur Du Plessis, should return too.

"We must clamber to get at the turrets, Monsieur," said Guilloit, "and perhaps you and Monsieur Le Curé may do yourselves a mischief; indeed you had better return."

The affrighted flock were very glad to be conducted in safety back by their pas-

tor and their Lord; and those that continued the search were equally so, to be rid of them: these last divided themselves into two bands; the one headed by the Chevalier, Louisot, and Antoine, proceeded towards the north turret, while Guilloit the elder, who was, of all, the best acquainted with the old edifice, conducted his division in the opposite direction.

The first party, after passing several large apartments, offensive with damps and desolation, and examining a multitude of closets to no purpose, arrived at length to the narrow winding passage that led to the turret; and began to ascend the shattered remains of the staircase. La Roche, who went first with the light, stumbling against a broken step, saved his shins at the expence of his lantern, of which he broke the glass; since Marion's alarm, he had no great stomach to the

business, for though brave enough for a soldier, and not at all afraid of a living enemy, that he could meet upon equal terms, he was yet very much so, of a dead one.

" Here is a token of bad luck, Monsieur mon Maitre," said the valet; " we had better return; we shall break our bones; and as for finding the girl here, we might as well seek her in the Antipodes; for I am sure her clumsy legs could never have clambered hither."

" A fine fellow for a soldier are you!" said his master, " I thought you had a better heart; well, if you are discouraged for a broken lantern, come back and let me take your place; the girl must be somewhere, I will not return with half my errand."

"Oh, if you are determined to go on, Sir," returned La Roche, "I can break my neck as well as another, *allons!*" He had scarce uttered these words when a sudden gust of wind finding admittance through a chasm in the wall, extinguished the torches and the light in the broken lantern and banged to, with a tremendous crash, the door by which they had just entered.

The situation of our heroes was none of the pleasantest. Left to explore their way in utter darkness, down a broken staircase, where at every step they risked at least the breaking of a limb; "Tread with caution, my friends," said the Chevalier, "there is nothing to apprehend but a false step."

In the mean time, Antoine, the hindmost, had gained the door; but what was his dismay to find it fast!

"Here's a fine kettle of fish!" exclaimed the poor fellow. "What business had *I* here?—So often as I have heard my grandmother say, that it was the place where all the witches in the world kept their sabbath?—Yes, 'tis all over with poor Jeannette; they have feasted upon her; and now we are shut up like chicken in a coop, for their next night's supper."

"Let me pass, Antoine," said the Chevalier; "I'll engage to open the door."

"Allons, Monsieur," he returned; pray come by, and let us see what *you* can do with a door that is bewitched."

The Chevalier descended cautiously, and reached the door without accident; but it resisted his utmost efforts, and he discovered with some concern, that it was

bewitched with a *spring-lock*, which could not be opened on the inward side.

Antoine forgot his distress for an instant, in his triumph over the Chevalier.

" Now, Monsieur, will you believe in withcraft?" cried he exultingly. " I thought the door was to have flown open at *your* touch; for if mere strength was all that was wanted, I do suppose I might have done it almost as soon as you."

La Roche who had often witnessed the coolness and conduct of his master in cases of far greater difficulty and danger, and who never doubted of making a good retreat, when once he was the leader, was extremely chagrined at this disappointment.

" Monsieur, mon Maitre!" he exclaimed, for pity's sake what is to be done? any

thing is better than staying here all night to be food for witches and devils."

"Thy folly is the least supportable part of the business," answered his master, "What risk is there of our being left to spend the night here? is not the family apprised of our route, and can you suppose, that they will not come after us? Sit down quietly upon the stairs and have patience, we shall speedily be released."

"The *family!*" repeated Antoine in a most lamentable tone of voice, "are, perhaps, all carried away in the whirlwind that put out our lanterns; the witches always raise a storm when they ride their broom-sticks through the air. I have heard my grandmother say so a hundred times."

"Pooh, pooh, Antoine," said La Roche, "never give way to melancholy and des-

pair, my friend; as long as we are all, let's be merry—Monsieur mon Maitre, will you allow us to sing?"

"Sing, if thou wilt," said his master, "but I would advise thee not to dance, a false step, or even a true one, would be attended with too much danger.

Meanwhile Louisot, without light or companion, had made his way to the summit of the tower. For an instant, he thought his pains well repaid; for, as at intervals, he called Jeannette; something like a human voice returned the sound; this at first rather startled him, but his natural intrepidity, and the hope of finding the object in pursuit enticed him on, and reaching the last dismantled room in the turret, he found to his great chagrin and disappointment, that the sound which had deceived him, was only the chattering

of a large colony of jackdaws, which his sudden intrusion had alarmed. The night was however serene, and innumerable stars sparkled in the clear blue firmament. Louisot stood awhile to contemplate the glorious spectacle, of which his elevation afforded him so favorable a view; he recognised among the constellations, those to which the simplicity of his forefathers had given familiar names.

"Yes, there ye are!" he exclaimed, "my friends, my protectors! the companions of my nightly watch! an old wall is my only separation from ye, and I feel afraid? Oh, shame, Louisot! how often have I passed whole nights secure, with no other company? a tower or a field—am I not equally in safety? on such a night as this, shepherds, keeping their night watch, were joined by a celestial choir, proclaiming—Glory to God on high, and peace on earth

earth to men of good will.—Oh! I could gaze upon those brilliant hosts till I thought them all vocal—No," they are not languages, nor speeches, whose voices are not heard?"

Louisot's soliloquy was interrupted by the cries of his companions, who, missing him, were calling after him in the utmost alarm.

Guilloit and his party had in the mean time explored the opposite tower and its appendages, with no better success; they had afterwards advanced as far into the vaults as a proper regard for their own safety would admit; while the gardens and outhouses had been carefully searched under the Baron's immediate inspection.

Every one was busied about Madame Du Lot, whose clamorous grief excited

general interest and commiseration; and for a while the prisoners in the north tower were entirely forgotten; at length some one entering from without, announced that a voice was heard to proceed from it; some little consternation prevailed while the Baron and the Curé repaired towards the spot, to assure themselves of the fact; they immediately recognised the voice of the imprisoned Louisot.

" Have you found Jeannette?" enquired they:

" Alas!" said Louisot, " We have lost ourselves and found nothing."

Guilloit and some of the servants were soon dispatched to their release, while the afflicted mother who had nourished a glimmering of hope at their delay, redoubled

her lamentations at seeing them return without her daughter.

Nothing now remained but to drag the moat, this was done with the least possible delay, but with no more success; however, as there was a communication with the river, those few, among the company, who were accustomed to trace effects to their natural causes, still suspected, that the unfortunate Jeannette, must have slipped into the moat, and have been carried off that way, while the numerous herd ascribed the whole merit of the adventure to the witches, and to the devil; for this melancholy fact which, although, it could not be disputed, could not either, be accounted for in the common course of nature, tended much to strengthen the prevailing and favorite opinion of the agency of evil spirits, which before was beginning to yield to the good sense and unremitting zeal of the pious pastor.

In vain did he repeat, in public and in private, that the power of all such has its limits, and cannot exceed what is conferred on them by human madness and depravity; and consequently must needs be without effect on the innocent and virtuous, or even to such inoffensive beings as Jeannette; that it was injurious to the Deity to suppose, that such an one could be given up to their malevolence; and many other arguments equally conclusive; but as none of them could do away the fact, they produced little or perhaps, no effect; while the circumstance itself spread a gloom which it required all the gaiety of the season to disperse; it did however disperse like all sublunary things; the afflicted mother began to listen to consolation, and the villagers to talk of something else.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARISH FEAST.

Preparations for the parish feast, now approaching, offered a very seasonable relief, and diverted the attention of the Villagers from the melancholy conclusion of that of the young Chevalier. This was properly the 20th of January, the day of St. Sebastian; but from the manner of its celebration, as we are going to relate, had been transferred to the 14th of June which being St. Basil, was the name day both of the Baron and his eldest son, and on that account likewise a festival of celebrity.

The youth of our Village had, in days of yore, been noted for dexterity in the use of the bow; for their encouragement in this talent, an Ancestor of the Baron's, had bestowed a silver arrow, as a prize to the best marksman, to be annually shot for, on the day of St. Sebastian, whom bowmen have chosen for their Patron, because under Diocletian, he was fastened to a tree and put to death with arrows.— This custom had suffered some suspension, during the lifetime of the late Baron; and the present Seigneur, had made himself very popular by reviving it. In so doing, he had however changed the day, as that of St. Sebastian, falling, as has been already observed, in the depth of winter, was liable to continual interruptions, from bad weather.

On the day of the Saint, the prize arrow was solemnly blest, and placed in a

conspicuous part of the Church; from that time, the youth began regularly to exercise themselves; and on the 14th of June it was decorated with flowers, and after high mass, taken down by the Curé, and carried in procession to the castle by young maidens dressed in their gayest attire. It was then fixed on a pole, erected for that purpose, in the centre of the avenue; a heart which was affixed to the point was the mark to be hit, in order to obtain the prize, which the Baron, with two other umpires decided; and Clara, seated on an eminence, and surrounded by the young women, usually bestowed.

The names of the candidates were written down in the order in which they were to present themselves, according to their years, the youngest first, and so on; in pursuance of this regulation, it was the Baron's two little sons who first exhibited;

they had been attired by their sister in the character of cupids, in light silken vests, with wings and quivers, and excited universal interest and admiration. At the signal of a bugle horn flourishing thrice, Isidore, the youngest, took his stand, his dexterity was far beyond his years;—"Oh! the dear child! the sweet little fellow!—how true he aims!" exclaimed a hundred mouths at once.

"I have not hit it, papa, tho," said he, running to his father, and looking disappointed, "perhaps Basil will."

"You have done wonders, my dear," said the delighted parent; "if you failed it was not from want of skill but of strength."

Basil's arrow flew further but not more true, he was well satisfied to have surpassed

his brother; and marched off as triumphantly as if he had gained the prize. The efforts of these youthful archers were beheld with a delight unalloyed with jealousy or apprehension and formed perhaps the most agreeable part of the festival.

The next in turn were youths from fourteen to sixteen years of age, who acquitted themselves little better; a crowd followed, the most successful of which had touched the prize, several had grazed the pole, for the youth in general were expert; but an archer having once gained the prize was not admitted to try again, and married men, and those who were twenty-three years of age complete, were likewise excluded.

The Chevalier Du Plessis and Louisot were now the only remaining competitors; the first of these had been expert, but for some time greatly out of practice. Louisot,

as the youngest, in conformity to the rules, should first have essayed his skill; but he waved his right, under some pretence of not being in readiness; and it was at length settled that they should draw their bows alternately, three times as usual, the Chevalier taking the lead.

It had so fallen out that the Chevalier had never been present upon this occasion before; but his uncle, who was acquainted with his adroitness from his childhood; dreaded his carrying off the prize, and would fain have dissuaded him from attempting it.

" You will mortify these good people, my dear Chevalier," said he, " and of what consequence can such a triumph be to you?"

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"I am quite out of practice, my good uncle," he replied, "it is very unlikely that I should succeed; yet if I should, be satisfied I certainly shall not exult over my good friends; and I rather think, they would sooner forgive me for excelling, than one of their own class.

He then took his stand, and aiming with a steady eye and hand, his arrow transfixed the pole, a few inches below the mark. Louisot, whose anxious eye followed its direction, trembling with eagerness, took aim; but his hand was unsteady, and his arrow fell short of the pole.

The Chevalier drew his second, and it passed over the prize, which it slightly grazed; Louisot's was even more unsuccessful than before, and the Chevalier, advancing, inwardly exclaimed, "Oh, Clara! this has a double aim!" he faltered,

and drew his last arrow; it flew with the rapidity of thought, but passed the mark, seeming to touch it, and fell some yards beyond.

Louisot, as he prepared his last chance, reconciled himself to the risk of a discomfiture in such good company; he was now cool and collected; and aiming with deliberation and composure, was completely successful; his arrow pierced the heart, and a loud shout of applause proclaimed his triumph.

The Chevalier, stifling the little chagrin, and mortification it was impossible to him not to feel, was the first to take the victor by the hand, and to give him joy; he conducted him, followed by the other competitors, to receive the reward of his address. Meanwhile the prize was taken

down, with Louisot's arrow still adhering to the heart, and carried in procession to Clara, before it was removed; she then took a scarf from her shoulders, and tying it to each end of the silver arrow, threw it over the head of the kneeling victor, while two young girls placed a crown of laurel on his head, and sung the following stanzas, all present joining in the chorus:—

The meed of worth, successful youth,
Receiving, meekly wear;
And docile hear, the serious truth,
These moral stanzas bear;
Exertion leads to fair renown,
And striving, thou shalt gain its crown.

To virtuous aims each view direct,
And steadily pursue;
So shall they strike with sure effect,
Like thine own arrow true;
With virtue aim at fair renown,
The prize is an immortal crown.

Louisot continued his kneeling attitude much longer than the ceremony required; his intelligent eye was bent to the ground, and his cheek glowed at once with modesty and transport; he was several times reminded to rise, but was deaf to every voice but Clara's, who at length said, "*Mais, mon ami, il faut cependant vous levez.*"*

"*Pardonnez, Mademoiselle,*" † said his Mother, "*Cest qu'il nose pas.*"

Louisot thus admonished, rose slowly, and not ungracefully, and bowing to the fair Clara, much lower than he had ever attempted before, joined his companions. The company then resorted to dinner in the great hall; and dancing

* You should rise my friend.

† Excuse him, Madam, he is confused.

and singing concluded the festivity of the day.

Meantime the name of the victor was engraven on the heart, with his age, and the date of the year, and it was afterwards hung as a trophy in the hall of the castle, according to the usual custom.

CHAPTER IX.

LOUISOT.

Some little time after Louisot's triumph, the Curé was informed that some one wanted to speak to him, and Louisot soon followed the message.

"What is there for your service, my good son?" said Monsieur Du Plessis, with his accustomed kindness.

Louisot bowed, and speaking very quick, said, "I am come to beg your blessing, and to take leave of you, Monsieur Le Curé, I am going to leave the village, I set off to-morrow morning."

"What do you mean, my good friend?" said the Curé, in the utmost astonishment, "What is the matter? Where are you going?"

"I am going to seek my fortune, sir," said the young man, "Why should I be buried here all my life-time?"

The Curé arose, and paced the room to and fro';

"Buried *here*, and going to seek your fortune? What new language is this for Louisot? What can you mean, my good friend?"

Louisot hung his head and hesitated.

"I cannot be happy here, Monsieur, my father has taken it into his head, that I am in love with Mademoiselle Thèrése at

the castle, although I never had such a thought; he says she is a coquette, and to prevent my marrying her, has looked me out a wife of his own choosing,—Marion D'Antré,—he says he will give us Uphill Farm, and wants me to marry directly;—I cannot marry, Monsieur Le Curé! I would do any thing, rather than be tied for life to a girl I don't like."

"Well, my good lad, if that is all, you need not quit the village; leave me to talk to your father, he is just and reasonable, I am sure he will not put any constraint upon your inclinations."

"'Tis all one, Monsieur; my father is an altered man; if there was not that, there would be something else; I must go, Monsieur Le Curé; *C'est un parti pris*; I cannot be happy here."

" If you cannot be happy here, my good youth, neither will you be so any where else; there must be something wrong in yourself, that can thus blind you to all the uneasiness you are going to give your family; reflect how necessary you are to your father, who is beginning to feel the infirmities of age; think of your mother's tenderness and affection; consider her fondness for you, and that her grief will be in proportion; I say nothing of your brothers and sisters, but I thought your fraternal union had been proverbial....... and where are you going? What is your plan?"

" I have no fixed plan, Monsieur;" said the young man; " the world is wide; my mother has relations at Nantz; if they will do nothing for me, I can but serve the king."

"My good son," said the Curé, earnestly, "what madness is this? you have some secret cause of discontent, why should you be afraid to impart it to me? am I wanting in indulgence any more than in friendship for you?—I am a man, and can feel for the weakness of my fellow-creatures; I am your father, and you are one of my best beloved children; I forbear to speak of the grief your departure will be to me; you have nearer and dearer connexions."

The tears ran down the cheeks of Louisot, and attempting to speak, he sobbed aloud.

The good Curé suffered him to weep without interruption.

"Courage, my friend," said he at length, "unreserve will follow these tears,

let me dry them, and believe that you have no friend more tender, more sincere, or more discreet;—what is your affiiction?"

"How shall I tell you," said Louisot, recovering, "what I dare not avow to myself? I repeat it, I *must* leave the village; you would be the first to advise me to do so, if you knew my heart."

"Have you an inclination for Thèrése?" inquired the good Curé; "I think I could undertake to remove your father's prejudices; the girl is lively, but by no means light."

"For *Thèrése!*" repeated Louisot, with a strong emphasis; "No indeed Monsieur, I have not the slightest inclination for *her!*"

"Have you then for any one else?" resumed Monsieur Du Plessis; you are a

worthy lad, and may depend on my good offices......"

"With Mademoiselle de Montfier, perhaps?" interrupted Louisot, in a tone of irony.

"With *Mademoiselle de Montfier!*" repeated the Curé, with the look of one petrified.

"Oh! forgive me, Monsieur;" said the youth, throwing himself at his feet, "if I have presumed to profane her name, it shall never be but to you: *Now* will you believe my case desperate? Oh! were our lovely mistress only beautiful, I could have gazed on her for ever as on a bright star placed far beyond my sphere, impossible to attain, or to hope for; but such goodness! such condescension! Oh! it has lessened the distance, it has approached her to earth and made me distracted: I haunt the Castle like a perturbed spirit,

and am every day witness to some new instance of her excellence. It was but yesterday that my father, assisting some of the workmen, received a dreadful wound in his leg by a stone which fell from the wall; we helped him to the Castle, and while Mademoiselle Frèron was preparing the ointment, our young lady herself, impatient of her stay, washed the wound and bound it up with her own handkerchief: how like an angel she looked! and how I wished, that the wound, or one ten times worse had been mine, to have been so attended! but no, I am too young, I should not have been so happy.—Her goodness extends to every thing,—servants, dependants, even animals; nothing is exempt. Two days ago, I followed her at a distance; she was going to the cottage of Pierre Du Puits, you know it is not far from the Castle; the little Chevalier was with her, carrying a basket, I am

sufe well filled; you know their fierce dog, he was loose and would have flown at her; how happy was I! I flew after him like lightning.........look, Monsieur, here is the bite I received, I wish it may never heal! how I enjoy the pain it gives me,—Mademoiselle De Montfier has wept over it! "Louisot, my good fellow," said she, her beautiful eyes filled with tears, "how grieved am I that you should suffer on my account! I am afraid you are more hurt than you will acknowledge." I was so pleased, Monsieur Le Curé, to be wounded in her defence, that no one could have suspected the pain I endured, yet it really was very great—look Monsieur at the marks of old Garde's tooth."

"You are mad, my poor lad;" said Monsieur du Plessis, whom surprize and concern had hitherto prevented from interrupting him; "nevertheless, as I know

you to be naturally gentle and reasonable, I still hope, this fever of your mind will subside; an inclination so chimerical and so hopeless, must necessarily yield to time and reflection; Mademoiselle de Montfier will be married and you too."

"Mademoiselle married!" exclaimed the Youth, "is it then likely?—and with whom?—Probably with Monsieur your nephew?—No, I can never see that day! My dear Sir, I *must* go; it is absolutely necessary."

Monsieur du Plessis remained some minutes silent, revolving in his mind, what to advise, and deeply concerned at so unexpected a turn of mind, in a young man, whom he had been accustomed to hold up to his flock, as an ornament, and an example. He well knew, that it was as useless to reason with the passions, as with

the winds, and flattered himself, that when Louisot had tasted a little of the crosses and difficulties of the world, he would return to his Father and his Village like the Prodigal Son.

" If you will go, my Son," said he, " let it be only for a time; and to change the scene, do not give your affectionate parents and me, the affliction of supposing that you quit us for ever; you surely cannot harbour such an intention?"

" No, certainly, Monsieur," answered the youth, " I hope with God's blessing, to see you all again; I ask your's, and your prayers, my good Sir."

Without giving Monsieur du Plessis time to answer, Louisot drew his hand over his eyes, and precipitately retired: For about a mile he continued running,

without stopping to take breath; and now, within sight of his Father's grounds, and of his own flock; the land he had so often tilled, the flock, that seemed to form a part of his family, his heart smote him with a thousand tender recollections and he sauntered sorrowfully along the remainder of the way. For the last time he acquitted himself of his usual avocations, and caressed his favourites among the fold, as they sported unconsciously about him.

"Alas! poor things!" said he, "am I indeed going to leave you? Another will supply my place and poor Louisot will not be missed."

He at length entered the cottage, where the family were assembled at supper.

"Where have you been, Louisot?" said his mother; "Come, your soup will not burn you, to-night."

It was little Jeannot's holiday, his brothers and sisters were unusually merry, for Clara had sent them wine from the Castle; they all drank her health; and when Louisot took his glass, he knelt on the ground, and solemnly prayed that Heaven might heap its blessings on her head.

"Louisot is very pious all of a sudden;" said his eldest sister Laurette; "first he makes us wait supper while he goes to see Monsieur Le Curé, and then he falls to prayers in the midst of it: I wonder what is to come next; is he going to turn Monk?"

When supper was over, Louisot retired before the rest, that he might make up his little bundle unperceived; with a few changes of linen, he put up a small stock of provision for his journey; money he had none, any more than an idea of its

necessity in the present order of things: he then pretended to lie down to rest. When all was still in the cottage; he arose trembling, and with great precaution, and stealing softly along with his *sabots* in his hand, escaped from the paternal roof.

He made the best of his way to the Castle, which was within a mile of his own home, and pacing round it, earnestly examined the windows, one only lamp was burning in the apartment of the Baron, the curtains were undrawn, and Louisot could see him walking to and fro, with a book in his hand. It was later than our fugitive had imagined; he had hoped to have reached the Castle before Clara had retired to rest, to have caught a last look at her through the casement; or perhaps to have heard her voice, to him the sweetest of all music, once more wishing him well. To depart without this little consolation

seemed worse than death; though hopeless of obtaining it, he yet loitered about, unable to draw himself from the spot, and watching with fearful anxiety the faint glimmering of the Baron's lamp; at length he saw it no more, and never benighted traveller, hailed a distant light, as did Louisot this, to him, propitious darkness. In the mean time he had been concerting his plan: he waited till he thought the master asleep, then retiring gently, he suddenly returned, running very fast; and just as he arrived under Clara's window on the opposite wing from the Baron's, called out with all his might, "*Au loup! Au loup!*" or "To the wolf," which is the true etymology of our English—"Halloo!" It so happened that Clara was not asleep, surprised at the uncommon noise, she leapt from her bed, and in her night dress, hastened to the window.

" Is there any thing the matter?" she inquired :

" Nothing to alarm you, Mademoiselle;" answered Louisot ; " the Wolf has been in our yard, and was carrying off a young lamb, but with Pastor's help I have recovered it."

" I am very glad of it," said Clara ; " I hope the poor little thing is not much hurt ?"

" Not materially, I believe, Mademoiselle," answered the youth ; " I beg pardon for having disturbed you, *cest la, le plus grand mal*; have the goodness to forgive it?"

" There is nothing to forgive, Louisot," said Clara, shutting the window," I wish you a good night."

The youth elated with the success of his little plot, and once more to have caught an imperfect view of Clara, and heard her address him in an accent of kindness, forgot all the happiness he was leaving behind; and all the difficulties he was setting forward to encounter; calling down blessings on her head, he tript lightly on, and by day break, was some miles from his tranquil home.

As soon as Clara awoke, she recollected the over-nights adventure, and solicitous for the fate of the supposed little innocent sufferer, she directed her morning walk, to the Cottage of Guilloit to enquire after it.

Good morning, *La Fermiere*," said she to Guilloit's wife, as she entered; "I hope the poor lamb was not much hurt? I am come on purpose to see how it is."

"What lamb, Mademoiselle?" answered the woman; "I have not heard of any being hurt;"

"The lamb that the wolf was carrying away last night, and that Louisot rescued just under my window, *ma bonne femme*;" said Clara:

The good woman, in some surprize, enquired for Louisot, who, as yet, had not been missed. No one had seen him, it was discovered since the over-night.

"Count the lambs, Francois;" said Madame Guilloit to her youngest boy—Francois returned, having found his reckoning compleat. Clara then related her story at length, which being compared with all circumstances, was found utterly inexplicable.

"I never knew my son Louisot, tell a lie in all his life, even in his own defence, or miss his daily avocations;" said his mother; "he was always the first in the field,—what can all this mean? Oh! he is certainly bewitched, the *Loupgarou* has carried him away, as he did Jeannette; Oh, my dear Louisot! my own best boy! I shall never see thee more; what will become of thy poor mother?" and she burst into a passion of tears:

"Make yourself easy, my good friend;" said Clara, tenderly, "he cannot be far off; I have no doubt but he is with his father, and will return to breakfast."

At this moment a messenger arrived from Guilloit, the father, in quest of Louisot, and to know why he absented himself from his usual business. The poor mother was incapable of giving a coherent answer

to these questions; hastily snatching her hood, she flew to the Curé for advice and consolation.

In the mean time, Clara totally bewildered in conjecture, returned to the Castle, and related all she knew of this singular adventure to her father; but he, suspecting some youthful frolic, treated it lightly, till the Chevalier du Plessis, arriving in the midst of the breakfast, related some further particulars.

" Our meal at home," said he, " has been so interrupted, that I was glad to make my escape; all the family of the Guilloit's are with my uncle, their favorite Louisot, is unaccountably missing, and he is exhausting himself in vain endeavours to console them."

" I hope it is not as they apprehend," said the Baron; " why should the

young man leave his family? he was always sober and well-inclined; what cause can be assigned for so indiscreet a step?"

The Chevalier was furnished with particulars, which precluded the possibility of a doubt.

Clara now related her adventure to the Chevalier, who enquired if she had seen the lamb, which Louisot pretended to have rescued?

"He had something under his arm," she answered; "it was not light enough to distinguish objects; but it looked white, and I concluded it to be the lamb."

"It seems strange, Mademoiselle," said the Chevalier, "that Louisot should choose

to make a disturbance just under your window, and invent such a story; what purpose could it answer?"

"It is wholly unaccountable to me," said Clara; "it appears like some sudden mental derangement: poor youth, how much I am concerned for him! what a rash step! what is to become of him? to what dangers he will be exposed!"

"He is not very unhappy, Mademoiselle," said the Chevalier, gravely; "since he interests you so much; there are those, who, perhaps, would willingly change with him, to be so lamented; however, I believe you may quiet your alarms; I have not the least doubt of his returning here shortly."

Clara glanced a look of surprise at the Chevalier; she could not imagine, why he should seem to blame anxiety, which

appeared to her so natural; and which her father had expressed before her: she was however abashed, and dropped the subject.

Nothing travels faster than news; the bad roads were no impediment, it was speedily known all over the Village. As some related the story, Henriot was made a party concerned; he had returned privately in the night and enticed away Louisot; but the *Loup-garou*, that general explainer of all inexplicable things, was, by many more, reported as the chief agent in this business; as this sorcerer, or demon, we cannot say which, enjoyed the reputation of assuming any form that might suit his mischievous purposes; he was said to have carried off Louisot in that of a lamb, while he, under the figure of the youth, answered the

questions of the young lady of the Castle: thus the whole matter was explained.

As these affairs were debating in the housekeeper's room, each recounting some strange event, and accounting for this in a different manner, Thèrése, seldom the last in delivering her opinion, observed that Mademoiselle Frèron was for setting the devil to work at every thing.

"For my part;" said she, "I am convinced that if any devil was concerned in Louisot's flight it was only that poor little devil called Love. Young women are to blame to be so hard-hearted," continued Thèrése, bridling.

"Oh! yes! I dare say," cried the housekeeper, "Louisot was dying for love of Ma'mselle Thèrése, and her terrible cruelty has driven him in despair from the

Village! what a sad thing it is, to be *so* fair and *so* coy!" added she, with something like a sneer.

"Why should he make such a disturbance just under *my* window?" said Thèrése; "perhaps if I had chanced to have heard him, instead of Mademoiselle, he might have opened his heart to me, and I might have dissuaded him from his rash enterprize; but, poor lad, he must have been *so* confounded to have heard Mademoiselle! —Well! I am very sorry; I am sure I had no notion of his being so in love with me, when he looked so cross, only at my joking a little with Monsieur La Roche! if every body were to speak their minds as I do; we should presently come to a right understanding, but if a young man always looks sulky and frumpish, when one happens to be a little merry, one must be a witch to

discover that he is distractedly in love with one all the while."

" Every body is in love with Thèrése," said the housekeeper," at least there is one person very much so,--even she herself; how happy she is in a good opinion of her pretty little person! she is likewise a little singular too; but that is no matter; she explains every thing in favor of her own system; if a young man marries, it is from despair of obtaining her fair hand; but if he runs away from her, he gives a still stronger proof of the delight he takes in her company."

" Poor Louisot!" exclaimed Thèrése, totally disregarding Mademoiselle Frèron's sarcasm; " I have a great mind to make a vow never to be cruel again, for fear it should end in my being an old maid like Mademoiselle Frèron."

"My lovers did not run away, nor marry others to prove their attachment;" said the housekeeper, "it was I that made my escape from their importunity; and if I have buried myself in this solitude, it was in order to free myself from them."

"You are perfectly free from them here, indeed," said Therése, "ah! why am I not equally so? but yonder comes Monsieur la Roche, who swears to me every day, that he never would have quitted Paris to come to this *obscurity* place, as he calls it, but for me."

Here she ran off singing.

CHAPTER IX.

CONTAINING

NOTHING NEW OR SURPRISING.

Two months of the Chevalier's congé, had now fled rapidly away, during which the families at the Castle and the Presbytery met almost every day.

The reader will suspect, that a partiality between the young people was the natural consequence, and he will not be altogether mistaken. It was not, however, the unreasonable and extravagant passion of

romance, though in a situation which might be conceived so peculiarly favorable to its luxuriant growth. The Chevalier du Plessis, entertained for Clara, a tender, generous affection, which every other circumstance, no less than such frequent intercourse tended to create and encourage. All the delightful associations of his boyish days, all the restrospections of his early life; every conception of virtue, happiness, innocence, and peace, led to Clara. In all his visions of future domestic bliss, her idea essentially formed a part; yet whenever he allowed himself to reflect, he was sensible, that he was indulging in chimeras, which nothing could realize but an event, his filial piety trembled but to think of, the death of the Marquis his father. Full well he knew the ambitious views entertained by him; the inflexibility of his temper, his absolute power, and his own entire dependance;

and that an union with the poorest cottage maid, was as likely to meet his father's wishes, as one with the lovely and accomplished object of his own; with a small fortune, and no splendid or advantageous connection; all her merit would avail her nothing in the eye of a man of the world, such as was literally, the Marquis du Plessis, that is, one who looked upon the idea of happiness in marriage, or of any thing but convenience, with the same contempt, and as of much of an illusion as persons rational and experienced usually do, on the romantic notions of first sight unalterable love, and everlasting passion; the dreams of the youth of ages long since past, and which are now very properly consigned, with fairy tales to the nursery.

Influenced by this knowledge of his father's disposition and views, as well as by his own native integrity, the Chevalier

du Plessis scorned to avail himself of the intimate footing on which he was received at the Castle, to endeavour at seducing the innocent heart of its youthful mistress. On the contrary, his behaviour became more circumspect in proportion, as his affections were more deeply engaged; till Clara, who had not yet reflected on the nature of her partiality for her old acquaintance and play-mate, which taking root in her infancy, had grown up with her, began to wonder at the distance and coldness of his address: whatever were her conjectures upon his behaviour, she speedily adopted the same style; and became almost unconsciously more reserved. The Chevalier immediately perceived the change, and his chagrin was so great, that it convinced him his heart was more deeply engaged than he had hitherto allowed himself but to suspect. A thousand times he had been on the point of soliciting an explanation

of his fair enslaver; but prudence and respect had hitherto tied his tongue.

One day, in conversation with the Baron de Montfier, as they were walking together, he was unintentionally led to enquire of him, if he had any views with regard to the establishment of Mademoiselle his daughter?

"This is a matter, my good friend," replied Monsieur de Montfier, "that as a parent, I cannot help thinking of sometimes, and the more I think of it, the more it embarrasses me. I wish Clara to be convinced, that it is no misfortune to live single; for in all the obstacles, I foresee to her being advantageously settled, I think this must ultimately be her fate: should her inclinations lead to the state of marriage, though I never would controul, I should wish to direct them,

and while I live, I have that confidence in her good sense, her gratitude, and filial affection, that I am convinced, I always shall. What may happen, when I am no more, I sometimes tremble to think of: my daughter, if young, will be left without support or guide, and may become the dupe of avarice or design. To inspire young minds with distrust, is perhaps as dangerous as it is difficult; yet, I must endeavour to arm her against that pliant flexibility of heart, that tender weakness so inherent in her sex, which disposes it always to yield, when ardently and perseverantly solicited; to consult inclination or gratitude, rather than judgment; and to conclude, the man who loves, or pretends to love, must needs be deserving a return. Women of sensibility, and accustomed to retirement are, above all, susceptible of yielding their hearts, though not their persons, an easy prey.

You are too young, Chevalier, to have had opportunities of observing, how infallibly an adroit man, who has free access to a female, will, in process of time, triumph over even aversion. This flexibility of heart is given to the softer sex, no doubt for the wisest purposes; if it be a misfortune to some individuals, it is a happiness to the generality. Women in the established order of polished society, having only a negative choice, how very few can be united to the object, they would perhaps prefer: consequently, but for this strong disposition to return the affection they inspire, a great majority of those who are settled in the nuptial state, would be more unhappy than I believe they generally are. But to return to Clara, who with all her gentleness does not want for energy. I flatter myself that I shall prevail upon her in all such cases, to let her reason decide before her heart.

I speak in the probability of my daughter's residing with her aunt at Paris, for in the case of my death, Chevalier, I cannot expect her to continue to be immured here."

"You have then no direct view to the establishment of Mademoiselle your daughter?" said the Chevalier.

"No, nor any indirect, my good friend," returned the Baron. "Among my neighbours it were vain to seek, although they are mostly very good people; yet I will tell you frankly, all that I have the honor to be acquainted with, are inferior in breeding and information to some of my own vassals and dependants: could I condemn my daughter exclusively to such society?—On the other hand, can I seek a settlement for her in Paris, among men of the *ton*, whose morals are certainly not

improved since I resided among them; such as never marry but for convenience, who scoff at the idea of attachment to a wife, and still more at that of fidelity to her? I own to you, my good friend, that the thought of seeing my darling child, with all her merit and all her virtues neglected; sacrificed to some worthless coquette of the mode; pining away under the slights and unkindness, of the man bound by every tie of honour and gratitude to cherish her, and promote her happiness, is sometimes too much for my philosophy."

"But, my dear Sir," rejoined the Chevalier, "all men are not as you represent them: corrupt as the age undoubtedly is, there still exist some worthy characters; some who would endeavour to deserve Mademoiselle your daughter, who at least would appreciate her merit; I am

sensible how difficult it must be to do her justice; yet still, there are those, who would endeavour at it."

"I do not mean to say," answered the Baron, "that there are no worthy characters; but scarce as they are, do you think it probable, that one of them should find out my daughter, with her small dowry of any thing but virtue, in this retirement, or can she seek them? No my good friend, I am familiarized to the idea of Clara living with a fond parent, to soothe his declining years, and to close his eyes; and then to look up for support and consolation to Heaven, from whence alone, the loss of a tender, doating father, can be adequately supplied. I have given up for her the pursuit of a second marriage, does she not owe me the sacrifice of a first?"

The Chevalier sighed profoundly, and after a pause of some minutes exclaimed—

"Alas! were I my own master"........ •

"Hush, my friend," eagerly interrupted the Baron, "I know what you would say, but you are *not* your own master. I *know* too that the Marquis your father has other views; and can easily imagine how much a disappointment would affect him. However different our ideas of happiness may be; I can allow for his manner of thinking, and of pursuing it, and feel, judging from myself, the pain it would give him, to have his favorite views crossed and blasted by him he built upon to support them—by his own child.—No, my dear Chevalier, you cannot be my son, there is not so much happiness in store for me; but grant me all the compensation in your power, by continuing to give me cause to regret that you cannot; let us always be friends, far too jealous of the esteem of each other to be capable of gratifying any

desire, however reasonable, by unwarrantable means."

The Chevalier pressed the Baron's hand, and hung his head; his heart sunk, and he felt as disappointed and oppressed, as if he had not been aware of the sentence that awaited him.

At this juncture the little boys appeared in sight, "Papa, papa!" cried out Basil, "Isidore has been pelting a poor frog with stones, and it cried *so* you can't think."

The youngest child now came running, to tell his own story.

"Isidore, my boy," said his father, "what is this I hear of you?—If you can do no good, at least do no harm; make it a rule never to hurt any thing, nor any body: a frog is a harmless thing, my child,

let it live its short life, and as far as it depends on you, let it live happy; suppose some gigantic being, to whom you would be nothing more than a little frog, were to pelt you with huge stones, how would you like it?"

"Why, papa," said the child, "I did not mean to hurt it. I was only in play."

"Well, my dear boy," returned his father, "remember all your life, never to sport with the feelings of others. Cutting jokes sometimes hurt more than stones. Basil, did not I overhear a little boy this morning, laughing at Goodman Gabin, because his nose is a little longer than common?—With much more reason might he have complained of the length of that little malignant tongue; a nose somewhat out of proportion one way or the other, hurts no one and cannot be helped; but

it is in the power of each of us, to govern our tongues, and to keep them within due bounds.—That you may remember this lesson the better, my lads," continued the Baron, "you must, each of you, learn the fable of the boy and the frogs, and repeat it to me before supper."

The children embraced their father, and ran eagerly home to execute his commands.

"I do not apologize to you, Chevalier," said the Baron, "for thus lecturing my boys in your presence, it is not so long, since I used to lecture you."

"Happy days!" exclaimed the Chevalier, "when I shared your kind parental admonitions, and hardly more welcome caresses, and are they indeed, gone for ever?"

" No, no, Chevalier," returned the Baron gaily, taking him by the arm, " I have a little admonition in store for you still; but yonder is my daughter coming, let us join her."

During the walk, and all the remainder of the evening, the Chevalier struggled vainly to conceal his dejection; Clara repeatedly enquired if he was unwell?—The little resentment she had conceived at his apparent coldness, yielded without effort to concern for his distress; unconscious to herself, she endeavoured to divert him; she addressed him with more attention, and spoke to him in an accent of more kindness, than ever she had done before: his cheerfulness returned, at the interest she betrayed, but it was only for the moment, and to leave him still more oppressed, when restored to solitude, to reflection, and to himself.

CHAPTER X.

THE WIDOW'S BRIDGE.

A few days after the conversation related in the last chapter, as the Baron and his family were walking, they met the Chevalier Du Plessis.

"Well met, my dear friend," said the Baron to him, "I believe there is a tempest in the air, my spirits are unusually depressed; I am going to try if a change of scene will raise them. I have ordered our collation to the arbor in the wood; Antoine is to bring my violin: you are arrived very opportunely to join us."

The Chevalier, with a look of extreme dejection, said he was too happy; and taking the little boys, one in each hand, accepted the invitation.

"Shall we see your uncle?" enquired the Baron—

"I hope so," answered the Chevalier, "I left word, that I was coming to spend the evening with you; he will probably follow as soon as he is at leisure."

When in sight of the arbor, the children set out a race to see who should be there first, but their friend did not, as usual, join their merriment.

The arbor consisted of a thatched octagon roof, supported by light pillars, cut from the surrounding trees, round each of which woodbine, jessamine, and roses had

been trained to mingle their encircling arms; the last of these were now in their most luxuriant bloom, and full pride of beauty and sweetness.—On one side was an opening through the wood, commanding a very romantic and extensive prospect, and from another the chapel, already described, formed at the extremity of the covered walk that led to it, a most agreeable point of view; a round table, with benches, composed the furniture.

When the company arrived, they found Mademoiselle Fréron and Thèrése, busily employed in setting out the fruits and cream; the first was desired to be seated, and to help the company, and the latter placed herself behind the chair of her mistress.

After the collation, the Baron took his violin; "We all seem in the humour to

relish a melancholy ditty," said he, "Clara shall give us the *Widow's Bridge*, while I endeavour to strum an accompaniment;" he tuned his instrument, and Clara sung as follows :—

THE WIDOW'S BRIDGE.*

Julia was blooming, young, and fair,
When her lov'd consort died;
An only son he left; her care,
Her comfort, and her pride.

Rumour proclaim'd her wealth and charms;
From far the suitor's came,
The skill'd in arts, the brave in arms,
Each sought the peerless dame;

* At some little distance from St. Philip's, in Spain, is a bridge, which is called the Widow's Bridge. It was erected by an unfortunate mother, who lost her only son in the torrent over which it is built, in order to save others from a like calamity.——*See Essays on Spain, by Mr. P——, vol.* 1.

But ev'ry proffer she denied,
Nor could to wed be won,
"Ah! can a mother," she replied,
"Love any, but her son?"

Meanwhile, the youth improv'd in grace,
In strength, and martial fire,
The doating mother joy'd to trace,
In every line his sire.

A noble tilt and tournament,
Was giv'n by the court;
The youth his mother's slow consent
Obtain'd, to share the sport:

Accoutred as became his state,
With trusty squire to lead,
All gay, with youthful pride elate,
He rushes to his steed:

But eager as to mount he sprung,
His mother damp'd his joy,
And "Oh," she cried, and round him clung,
"Oh! tarry not, my boy!"

The road to where the feast was held,
  Across a torrent lay,
Impetuous rains, the wave had swell'd,
  And dang'rous was the way.

Rashly the youth essay'd to pass,
  He urg'd his courser loth ;
His footing fails—alas ! alas !—
  The flood engulphs them both !

Who shall the sad event declare,
  What hardy tongue impart,
The piteous tale, that death must bear,
  To a maternal heart ?

The sad commission, to reveal,
  A holy priest receives,
Who strives with pious words, to heal
  The deadly wound he gives.

Alas ! in vain....she silent hears....
  No utt'rance gives relief.....
Complaints and murmurings and tears
  Denote a *common* grief :—

At length she spoke with falt'ring breath,
"The will of Heav'n be done!....
"Oh! let one grave unite in death,
"The mother and the son!"

"Be our sad tomb the pilgrim's guide,
"And all my wealth bestow'd,
"To raise across the foaming tide,
"A safe and friendly road;

"That so, no son in tender years,
"May feed the greedy wave,
"That so, no future widow's tears,
"Its fatal banks may lave."

She said, and died:....Her kind intent,
Is piously fulfill'd;
Athwart the raging element,
A stately bridge they build:

It still subsists as heretofore,
To tender pity dear;
The trav'ller passes silent o'er—
But ne'er without a tear.

Clara had some difficulty to articulate the last verse, and her audience were also in tears. The Baron was the first to break the pause of silence which succeeded.

"Is not the sentiment sublime, Chevalier," said he; "which urges a woman thus dying of her own distress, to direct her last views to the preservation of others from a similar calamity? If the story is not true, it is finely imagined."

"I am willing to think it true," said the Chevalier, after a pause, "I would have every thing that does honor to human nature, at least founded on fact."

"The story is too beautiful to be a fiction," said Clara, "it happened in Spain; you know, papa, you told me so."

" Did I, my dear?" answered her father; " Well, in Spain then, let it be, to conduct us to the Castles, we are so apt to build there."*

" Oh, fie! papa," said Clara, " thus to demolish the Widow's Bridge!"

" Nay, my child," said he, " if it be as well founded as I wish, I cannot demolish it, if I would; and certainly I would not, if I could; the widower's sentiments are too exactly conformable to those of the widow; he has ever been as ready to answer as she."

" Ah! can a father, blest like me,
" Love any but his child?"

* Castles in the air, are called by the French Castles in *Spain.*

The Baron embraced his children, and Clara kissing her father's hand, bedewed it with the tears of gratitude, and filial affection.

The Chevalier, who contemplated this scene with silent emotion, here suddenly arose, and walked with an agitated step towards the Chapel;—he soon returned.

"Be not surprized, my good friends," said he, "if I appear disturbed; Alas! it is my last evening here; I have my orders, and must leave you to-morrow."

The company gazed upon him, and upon each other in silence.

"So soon, Chevalier!" at length said the Baron, "I thought you had obtained another month?"

"So I flattered myself," he replied; "but my wishes deceived me; La Roche returned this afternoon with letters from Saumur; there is one from my father, and another from my Colonel; I should have had them three days ago; our regiment is going to St. Domingo; I have orders to join immediately, and must set off for Marseilles to-morrow: my father reproaches me for my long stay here, which precludes me from the possibility of going to Paris to take leave of him, previous to an absence, too probably, of some years."

A dead silence followed this explanation; Thèrése was the first to break it:

"Is Monsieur La Roche to go?" enquired she softly:

"I should be unwilling to part with him, Mademoiselle;" said the Chevalier; "however if you wish it........"

"*I* wish it! Oh, no, indeed, Monsieur," said Thèrése, blushing; "I wish nothing at all; I only just enquired; I suppose he may have a furlough, now and then, just to come and see his friends."

"Oh, yes! doubtless;" said the housekeeper; "a furlough of a month, for a voyage that will take him six, and on purpose to see Mademoiselle Thèrése!"

"No, Mademoiselle," said the Chevalier; "nothing but sickness or death, gives leave of absence from the regiments on duty in the Colonies; so, my pretty Thèrése, you had better look out for another sweetheart, for there is little chance of your seeing either master or man for several years;.........if at all;" added he mournfully; "my good friend," addressing the Baron, "I have a horror of the Colonies,

and I will own to you, this voyage does not amuse me at all."

"The separation of friends," answered the Baron, after a short pause, "is not of itself a pleasant thing; but my dear young friend, reasonable people bend their minds to their circumstances; why should *you* fear another climate? your sober habits will ensure you health, and your amiable manners, friends, all over the habitable world; it is those you leave who have the most cause for regret. All Montfier has been accustomed to look for the month of your visit, as to a season of jubilee; for half the period of your absence, we talk of enjoyments past; and for the other half, of those that are to return with the Chevalier; your poor uncle!—but he is so truly pious:"

"Can I flatter myself ever to see him again?" said the Chevalier; "and will not

you, my good friend, allow for the sadness inseparable from that idea?—Another Climate!—Alas, it is another world, and a still worse: dreadfully fertile in depravity and vice, where the dregs of all Europe are discharged, and the seeds of its foulest corruptions are sure to find a congenial soil. Human nature is disgraced below the brute; the European adopts the vices of the soil without having its excuse: what objects have I seen return from thence? debilitated youth, old in infirmity, and the experience of every degrading excess; sunk in indolence and apathy, with hardly any thing human, but the form and the appetite, which last they continued to pamper, at the expence of honour, fortune, body, and soul!—The natives oppressed, and hardly deserving a better fate, and yielding in depravity to nothing but their worthless task-masters!—Alas, my good friend, I cannot help com-

paring what my fate now is, with what it is so soon to be; oh, the contrast! my heart sickens before it;—but wherever I am *that* will always be with you:—dear Mademoiselle Clara, will not you sometimes think of me with pity, my health of mind and body, alike exposed to the most fearful contagion? Exiled from all I love, condemned to all I most abhor, the continual and painful witness of cruelty and injustice I cannot redress;—sure you will think of me in your prayers?"

Clara was so astonished at the sudden departure of the Chevalier,—at all she heard—at this dreadful picture of the land he was going to inhabit—at the time he was likely to spend there, which at looking forward appeared to her so immense—that she had hardly presence of mind to be grieved; she gazed upon him, her eyes fixed in surprize, and her ideas so con-

fused, that she knew not how to frame an answer.

"Nay, Mademoiselle," resumed he, "if you will not undertake to pray for me, I must give myself up for lost."

Clara offered him her hand, hardly conscious that she did so:

"Indeed," said she, "I always pray for you, and if doing nothing else from morning to night would ensure your safety from such dangers, I would pass my whole life before the altar; your uncle will pray for you, my dear Chevalier, and the prayers of so very good a man *must* prevail."

The Chevalier, who still held the hand she had offered him, now respectfully saluted it.

Monsieur du Plessis soon after joined the company:

"I am come to spend a melancholy evening with you, my good friend," said this worthy Ecclesiastic to the Baron; "the surprise of my nephew's departure on such a destination, is almost too much for my fortitude; I am more affected than perhaps I should allow myself to be; will not your good-nature, Mademoiselle Clara, furnish you with some expedient to divert our attention?—I do not approve of giving way to melancholy."

"Clara looks as if she wanted amusement herself," said the Baron; "my good friend, the loss of your nephew is a general calamity; I am afraid it will be as difficult to divert us from the idea, as to reconcile us to it.—Come, shall we walk towards the Castle?"

The party arose, and while Mademoiselle Frèron and the servants returned home with the music and baskets, the company strolled leisurely through the wood. The Chevalier offered his arm to Clara, while her brothers, one taking the Baron's hand, the other the Curé's, as they tript gaily along, asked a thousand infantine questions, relative to the Chevalier's departure, which at least served to divert the attention while they were resolving; such as, if St. Domingo was farther off than Paris?—If it was impossible to reach it by land?—If the sea was all water, and wider than the little Loire?—If the blacks were not very frightful? &c. &c. &c.

The evening was spent in a tender kind of melancholy; at supper little was ate, and little said. Towards the end of it, the Baron called for some of his best wine,

and filling it round, endeavoured to appear cheerful.

"To our next happy meeting," said he, and every one mixed their cup with tears. Monsieur de Montfier sent his daughter for a ring which had belonged to the late Baroness, and which contained some of his hair.

"Wear this slight memorial of my friendship;" said he, offering it to the Chevalier; "and let it remind you, not to supply my place too lightly."

"What can I give the Chevalier, papa," said Clara, "for a memorial of me?—here is my handkerchief pin, (it was a ruby in the form of a heart) take it," said she, presenting it to him; "it is of small value, but it may remind you, as papa

says, to think of absent friends, and not to engage with new ones too hastily."

The Chevalier kissed the gift, and the hand from which he received it.

"Yes, Mademoiselle," said he, "it shall remind me of Heaven and of the giver, and never to do any thing unworthy of either; I had presumed," continued he, "to bring a small token of my respect; and if the Baron will permit me?"………

Both looked at Monsieur de Montfier, who smiling assent, the Chevalier bent one knee to the ground, and presented to Clara a *bon-bon* box of very elegant taste: it was of mother o'pearl, set in gold, and had the picture of St. Lewis, his patron saint, beautifully painted on the lid. Clara fixed her eyes intently on the portrait, and promised, while they overflowed with

tears, to think often of the giver, and often to implore the intercession of his patron for him.

The little boys were eager to give their keepsakes to their departing friend; Basil offered of his treasures what he loved the best; Isidore what he thought the finest: with the first it was a favorite kid; with the second, a silver pencil case which had been the reward of some extraordinary good conduct.

"What can I do with these lovely children," said the Chevalier, taking them in his arms; "to accept or to refuse their gifts is almost equally distressing;—my friend Basil, I cannot deprive you of your darling little kid, give me in its place the ribbon your sister took from her neck to tie round his; and you, my man Isidore, shall give me, instead of the pencil case,

the little drawing of the cherub, which your sister finished for you with the pencil."

The children were well satisfied with this arrangement, particularly as the Chevalier promised at the end of it, to send them sugar and sweetmeats from the West Indies.

"You will write to us often, Chevalier," said the Baron.

He promised to have letters in readiness for every opportunity, and soon after slipped away without taking any leave.

In the mean time, La Roche had been making his adieus at the second table, where the scene was not quite so sentimental. Thérése thought she must be melancholy, and for a little while suc-

ceeded in appearing so. La Roche said, "that he had not the vanity to expect that she would keep herself disengaged till his return, which indeed was a very uncertain thing to wait for, as it might never be."

"If, however, I should chance to make my fortune," continued he; "and more unlikely things have come to pass, in that case if Mademoiselle would condescend to come to me, instead of my coming to her, she should be waited on by black slaves, not to mention her most devoted white one."

La Roche happened to be particularly dark.

"Why as to that, Monsieur," said Thèrése, "you do well to go to a country

of black *negers:* tis the only place where you could possibly be taken for a white."

The Chevalier called;

" Adieu, Mademoiselle Thèrése," said La Roche, " I must beg leave to salute you and all the ladies; here we are, alive and merry at this moment, we may, perhaps, never meet so again:"

" We may as well be dead as not merry," answered Thèrése; " for my part I promise to think of Monsieur La Roche every time I see any thing merry and black; a black-bird singing, a black cat purring, a black dog yelping, or even a black donkey braying."

" Thank you, Mademoiselle," said he;" in return I promise to think of you, every

time I see any thing *black* and *white*, although it should happen to be a magpie: farewell charming Thèrése, be constant to your mirth, your health, and good humour, whatever you may be to your most devoted humble servant."

Thèrése laughed to avoid crying, and the scene closed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SEPARATION OF FRIENDS.

Although our fair heroine had much outwatched her accustomed hour, she awoke the next morning earlier than usual, and hearing the castle clock strike four, she arose somewhat precipitately and hastened to her window to inhale the fragrant morning breeze.

"The weather is favorable for the Chevalier," said she to herself, "I wonder if he passes this way?"

It was not indeed at all in his road, he had however determined that it should be, and Clara soon perceived two horsemen advancing on a brisk canter; and shutting her casement she retired to a little distance.

The foremost as he drew near, checked his steed, and taking off his hat rode uncovered, earnestly looking at the upper windows as he passed them. It was not Clara's intention to have discovered herself, but the expression of his countenance was so anxious and so sad, that reflecting it was too probably the last time she should ever speak to him, her heart softened, her scruples vanished, and once more she opened her casement. The countenance of her friend instantly brightened, and respectfully bowing, he said :—

"To what blest accident do I once more owe the happiness of paying my obedience to Mademoiselle? — Oh! what a prosperous onset; already do I begin to have a better opinion of my destiny."

"Whatever the accident," replied the lady, "I am far from regretting it, I do assure you—you stole away last night without permitting us to wish you a prosperous voyage: allow me to supply the omission, our best wishes attend you, believe me, Chevalier."

The horse the Chevalier rode was not quite so willing to stop as his master, he pranced and pawed very impatiently, and Clara, a little alarmed, waving her handkerchief as a signal to the Chevalier to ride on and restrain him no further, it fell from her hand; the Cheva-

lier had the address to catch it; but the circumstance alarmed his horse so much that he became totally ungovernable, and after much contention, which served to shew the skill of his rider, set off at full speed, without allowing the latter to restore what he had, indeed, a great inclination to keep.

"I will bring you back the handkerchief Mademoiselle," said La Roche.

"Upon no account, La Roche," anwered Clara; "pray do not think of engaging your master to stop that fiery animal, till he has a little spent his courage.—The handkerchief is of no consequence in the world, ride on I beg of you."

While the Chevalier du Plessis, like a true knight errant, was pressing to his heart what had so lately dropped from

the hand, or perhaps even wiped the tears of the innocent Clara, and finding much consolation from this trivial incident; she remained at the window gazing on vacancy, when all traces of her interesting friend were lost in it; and then gave free course to the first tears of real sorrow she had ever shed. She was thus obliged to quit her station for another handkerchief.

"Mine may perhaps serve the poor Chevalier," said she, "if he drops a tear to absent friends—I have dried his formally when we were playfellows; well, my handkerchief may, perhaps, supply my place."

As Clara was consoling herself with this reflection, Thèrése entered her apartment to attend, as usual, her lady's commands. "It is lovely weather,"

said the latter to her maid, " suppose we perform our morning exercises at the oratory, my head aches a little, I think the walk will relieve me."

" With all my heart, Mademoiselle," answered Thèrése, " if you are sure the air will not hurt your eyes, they are all red and inflamed." Clara not answering, nor seeming disposed to conversation, they walked in silence to the Chapel already described, where Clara passed an hour in fervent prayer, wherein the health and safety of her friend were not forgotten. Returning serenity, was the first fruit of this pious act; and she appeared at the breakfast hour, with her accustomed cheerfulness and good humour; nor did she fail to acquaint her father, that she had seen their mutual friend, as he passed, and been the in-

terpreter of the good wishes of the family.

"Poor Chevalier!" said the Baron, "and did he really come so much out of his way to bless us as he passed?—Truly I would have been up had I suspected it; for my dear children we may perhaps never see him more; and what is almost as bad, and more certain, we shall never see his fellow; however, we ought not to repine; to know that there exists such a character is a distinguished happiness; to reckon him among our friends, should almost console us for his absence.

The remembrance of the Chevalier du Plessis can never arise unmixt with that of some pleasure, or some virtue. Yes, my dear Clara, you are now of an age to feel this sentiment: the very priva-

tions of virtue afford delights superior to all the enjoyments of vice; they make us sensible that we have a soul, formed for God and immortality."

Clara listened with enthusiasm to this warm eulogium of her father's, which seemed to authorise the partiality it was impossible to her not to feel.

"I may then think of him," said she to herself, "his idea may be ever present with me "*Que Celie absente rien ne m'est si present*;"* I can think of the Chevalier as of a blessed spirit, absence will but exalt him to me the more; and should we never meet again!—— Never!—— Oh! there is a world where that cruel word will have no meaning— there we shall surely meet, and, if alas!

* Nothing is so present to me as Celia absent.

he should go thither the first, shall I not have two guardian angels?——Dear Chevalier, amiable friend; I may then cherish thy idea, without blame; my fond heart desires no more."

While Clara was employed at her needle-work, she sang, almost unconsci-sciously, several times over an ariet, which the Chevalier du Plessis had brought from Paris, and which was then much in vogue; the words were as follows:—

SONG.

Take this gift if we must sever,
  Dearest friend, ah dearest friend!
Bear me in remembrance ever,
  Friendship only death should end.

Cruel fortune thus to sever,
  Hearts so faithful, friends so true,
Bear me in remembrance ever,
  Though constrain'd, we bid adieu!

"Why, Mademoiselle," at length interrupted Thèrése, "you will make me learn that melancholy ditty in spite of myself. I protest this is the third time you have sung it."

"I like it, Thèrése," said Clara.

"I never heard it before," returned the waiting woman, "I must nevertheless allow that the song appears to great advantage from the expression which you give it. If I could sing any thing so dismal, I would try to help you."

"Do, Thèrése," said her mistress, "I require help," she then resumed her song, her maid joining her. — After a pause, the latter enquired, "if it was probable that the travellers might be arrived at Marseilles?"

"No, Thèrése," replied the former, "nor yet one half quarter of the way."

"It is then very far off?—and when arrived there, they will not be half way to St. Domingo, *n'est-ce-pas* Mademoiselle?"

"No, nor any thing about it Thèrése, —Alas! my dear girl, what an imperfect idea you have formed of the immense distance of America!"

"I have no idea of it at all, Mademoiselle," rejoined Thèrése, "but you really frighten me. I begin to wonder how people get there, and still more how they ever get back. How foolish it is to go so far from home, in search of dangers and difficulties, and death in so many shapes and forms into the bargain, when one may live and die

too, without any danger or difficulty at all, in one's own country?"

"You have not the spirit of adventure, Thèrése," said Clara, "nor I either, I must confess; yet still it is very proper that some people should have it, or you must go without the coffee you are so fond of, and have no sugar to preserve your fruit."

"Well," said Thèrése, "much as I love coffee and sweet things, I do believe I could be content to go without all my life-time Sundays and holidays and all, rather than have my good friends go so far to fetch them. — But I always thought sugar and coffee were made at Paris, as well as new caps, new songs, new fashions, and all sorts of pretty things. —I am sure it is from thence that we receive them."

"That is certain," said Clara, "yet they are, nevertheless, the produce of another world. — But apropos of sugar and sweetmeats, I have not shewn you the *bon-bon* box which the Chevalier du Plessis gave me at parting."

Thèrése was in extacies at the beauty of the present.

"This too comes from Paris," said she; "Oh what a fine place it must be to produce so many fine things!—But whose picture is this upon the lid?—Oh it is some saint I perceive; well, but for the glory, I protest I should have taken it for the Chevalier himself, he has just such a mild, sweet look, and then the aquiline nose, and the form of the mouth.—Mademoiselle it is as like him as two drops of water."

"Do you think so Thèrése?" said her mistress, taking it from her, and attentively examining the countenance, she easily persuaded herself that her woman was in the right.

"Whatever looks benignant, looks like him," said she to herself as she replaced the box in her pocket, with a sensation of delight, such as a miser may perhaps experience when committing to some place of imagined security, his darling gold.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE CURATE.

About a fortnight from the departure of the Chevalier du Plessis, his uncle arrived one evening at the Castle, bringing with him a stranger, whom he introduced as his Curate, by the name of the Abbè de Louverie.

" You will be surprized Sir," said he to the Baron, " that I, who have so long declined help, should have accepted it thus suddenly; the case is this, that feeling the loss of my nephew very severely, and this young

gentleman being in the mean time offered to me from a most respectable quarter, I have been induced to accept the honour, as much for company as for assistance."

The Baron received the young Abbé whose appearance was much in his favour, with his accustomed frankness and politeness.

" Our little society is likely to be much benefited by the acquisition of Monsieur l'Abbé" said he, " I hope he will do us the honour to be our frequent guest."

The stranger made a suitable acknowledgment, and Clara soon after joining the company, was introduced to him, and the conversation speedily became animated.

" Montfier can afford but a *triste sejour* " said the Baron, " to one so lately from Paris, as I understand Monsieur to be."

" I have no very particular predeliction for Paris, Sir," returned the Abbé, " except as the centre of the fine Arts, for which I have some little taste; if ever it be in my power I shall visit Rome, curiosity is my predominant passion; but unless I had the means of affording it ample gratification, such a remote village as this, is as agreeable to me, as the most populous city: I have already discovered" added he politely, " that it affords society such as capitals cannot always boast."

The Baron bowing for the compliment, enquired, " If Monsieur l' Abbé had received his education at Paris?" and

was answered that he had studied two years in that city; but previously at the celebrated cottage, late the Jesuits, at La Fléche. Some further conversation introduced the following Epigram produced by an *elève* of those learned fathers, who for some youthful frolic had been saddled with an imposition. It is to be observed in explanation, that the College of La Fléche *anglice*, the arrow, was founded by Henry the fourth, and that the then superior, appointed, as we believe, by the Pope, was called L'Arc or the bow. The Epigram was in Latin and may be thus Englished—

Henry the Arrow gave, the Pope the Bow,
The String so well deserved who shall bestow?

"Wit is so pointed a weapon" said the Baron, "that it often wounds deeply where argument cannot find a vulnerable

place. Religion has suffered from its shafts, as well as her champions the persecuted and calumniated Jesuits, for although an epigram or a *bon mot* would never influence the opinion of such as are at all competent to judge; yet these form alas! so small a minority! A peel of laughter at a happy conceit can overwhelm the best chain of argument: Every one can laugh, though few are qualified to reason; thus the wit and his audience of fools go off triumphantly; boasting they have conquered whom they have silenced by superior vociferation. Meanwhile the *bon mot* is repeated, it runs from mouth to mouth, like wild fire as it is, but who shall repeat the solid sense that proves its futility, and who will attend to it, if repeated?"

The Abbé de Louverie who had received his education and his opinions

from those who immediately succeeded the Jesuits, and who having profited of their misfortunes were far from lamenting them, answered rather in a dogmatical tone, "that wit in this case was engaged in the cause of truth and justice, and that as for the Jesuits there could be no doubt, but they had deserved their fate," "It was proved," added he.

"It was said, Monsieur l' Abbé" returned the Baron, "but believe me it was never proved: that you, considering from what quarter you derive your opinions, should be a little prejudiced against them, is not very surprizing; but even their enemies are constrained to allow, that their universal talents, and indefatigable assiduity, particularly in regard to the education of youth, have not yet been adequately supplied:

it is clear that you have well profited under their successors, but young men of united abilities and assiduity owe little to their tutors. Any blockhead which possesses a little Latin and Greek, may impart of that little to such as are willing to imbibe it; but the Jesuits by their peculiar attention to the discovering of the talents of their pupils could strike fire out of a block: To study the peculiar bias of the mind, to find what useful things may be taught those who are incapable of the abstruse sciences; and have not the gift of languages; was an art peculiar to that proscribed body of men; who were obnoxious, only because they formed a powerful fence to the Religion of their country. You remember the fable of the sheep that gave up their dogs, Monsieur l' Abbé, I hope the consequences will not be the same;

I sometimes think there is great danger of it.'"

The young Abbé did not follow up the argument; if in the warmth of conversation, it sometimes happened to him to contradict his superiors, either in age or in rank, he was far too well bred to persist in his error. The conversation took another turn; he succeeded so well in translating an Italian song, of which Clara wished to know the meaning; that the Baron was induced to propose to him to give his daughter lessons in that language: and all parties being agreed, the matter was speedily arranged. The Abbè was likewise musical; he could perform in concert upon several instruments, and if his voice was not fine, he knew how to manage it with judgment and taste.

"You are arrived, most opportunely, Monsieur l' Abbé," said the Baron taking him by the hand at parting; "to divert us from dwelling too much on a late severe loss; you appear well qualified to make us forget, I will not say absent friends, but a part of our regret for the loss of them—you will oblige us by being our frequent guest."

The Abbé promised not to be ungrateful for the honour done him; and the company parted mutually satisfied, and without the smallest disposition to pick out in each other subjects for sarcastic animadversion as is so frequently the case. Nevertheless Clara could not refrain from drawing comparisons between the Abbé and the Chevalier; and from giving to the latter a decided superiority in every point of view.

"The Abbé," said she to herself, "seems like a man of the world who has mistaken his career, while our poor Chevalier has the appearance of one forcibly torn from the seclusion he would have chosen, and thrown upon a world that is unworthy of him."

Mademoiselle de Montfier's judgment, was in regard to the young Ecclesiastick, not very erroneous, he was of a noble family; which having great connections and expectations of advancement for him in the church; had chosen his profession for him; without much consulting his individual inclination. He was nevertheless, not averse to it, his morals were good, and his conduct regular; yet being newly ordained, this remote village and its worthy Pastor were found out for him, as a very proper security for both. He was not likely

to disgrace his calling any more than to be very useful in it, his abilities were good, and he willingly applied himself to their improvement; yet in other respects he was rather of an indolent disposition: his temper was chearful and pliant, his manners insinuating, and he soon gained upon the affections of Monsieur du Plessis; whose easiness and activity, two qualities rarely united, ended in his doing the greatest part of the duty himself, even the more laborious, for which he had purposely taken an assistant.

Soon after his arrival the young Curate was sent for to attend a sick person, who happened to be the good man Simon's wife, already noticed for being so often in danger of death: As he was praying by her, her features became suddenly distorted, she screamed dreadfully

and threw herself about in the most violent convulsions; her daughters, instead of helping, ran out of the house; had he consulted his alarm, he would have done the same; but a sentiment of humanity compelled him to remain, and give the poor woman all the assistance in his power, which was merely to hold her to prevent her beating herself against the ground; and for this he was obliged to use all his strength; her husband at length arrived to his release; but he was so affected never having seen any one in a fit before; that on his return he had a fainting fit himself.

Monsieur du Plessis, who treated his Curate in every respect as the tenderest of fathers would a darling son; upon this, gave orders, that for the future, he should never be called to attend any sick person, except he himself was absent or unable.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARRIVAL OF ANOTHER STRANGER.

Of all the inhabitants of Montfier, the seigneur, and the Curé, alone held any correspondence with the rest of the world. The departure of the Chevalier had induced them to have a settled plan of sending on stated days to Saumur, the nearest post town for letters. The young Abbé, whose seclusion from the busy haunts of men, only increased his desire of knowing what they were about, was very glad to avail himself of this arrangement for the purpose of regular communications with his friends.

The Chevalier du Plessis was detained at Marseilles much longer than he had expected, or than his utter inexperience in the uncertainty of a sea voyage, had given him the least reason to apprehend. He wrote regularly from thence as long as he remained there; always saying, that it would probably be the last time he should have the satisfaction of dating from France; yet always requesting that his friends would not fail to give him regular answers, although at the risk of their not reaching him there. The last letter, dated from on ship-board, arrived at length; and spread a transient gloom over the sun of cheerfulness that usually enlivened the solitudes of Montfier. — It consisted but of these few words:—

"The wind is favorable; the sails are setting; dearest friends adieu!"

In the evening after the receipt of this letter the good Curé was lamenting with his friends at the Castle, on the length of time that would probably elapse before he could hope for tidings of his nephew, when his housekeeper arriving in great haste, and in evident perturbation, desired to speak with him.

"Monsieur," said she, "I am frightened to death! Monsieur l'Abbé is gone out I cannot tell where; and there is a strange, outlandish man arrived, who claims your hospitality; but it will be impossible to me to sleep under the same roof with him, and I hope you will refuse it."

"I cannot refuse it Madame," said her Master, "nor can I imagine why you should wish me to do so."

"Why, Monsieur, the man is either a Turk or a Jew, he is no Christian, I am sure; he wears a white round hat; and speaks such French as never was heard; I had the greatest difficulty to make out his meaning; I left Nicholas to mind him, and see that he did not steal any thing, and ran here myself to ask you, what is to be done to get rid of him."

The Curé now returned to the Baron, and acquainted him, that he was called upon to pay the duties of hospitality to a stranger and a traveller, and was therefore under the necessity of taking leave.

"If your guest is not too fatigued, Monsieur le Curè," said the Baron, "pray return and bring him with you to supper."

Madame du Lot, who was within hearing, lifted up her eyes at this invitation, but inwardly exulted in the hope, that the stranger might perhaps be lodged as well as supped at the Castle; extraordinary trouble was as little to her taste as extraordinary expence; in the confidence of being spared both, she very readily offered her services to deliver the Baron's invitation, and to send Nicholas to conduct the stranger to the Castle.

"It is quite unnecessary," said she, "for Monsieur le Curé, to have the trouble of going to fetch him: I warrant Nicholas can shew him the way hither; if we can but make him understand."

Her Master did not however, in this instance, however he might sometimes give way to the opinion of his house-

keeper, his politeness, which was the result of mingled good-nature and benevolence; never failed to impel him to unite delicacy with attention, whenever he undertook to oblige; he accordingly hastened his departure, promising to return if the scheme appeared at all agreeable to his unknown visitor.

He found on his arrival at the Presbytery, a man of middle age, and middle stature; of an open ingenuous countenance, and very little ceremony.

" Monsieur," said the stranger, " I am an Englishman, I have a passion for agriculture, and am travelling, partly to indulge a natural propensity, while at the same time, I endeavour to improve my knowledge from the experience of other nations, as well as of my own; and to communicate my discoveries for the reciprocal advantage of all. I have

wandered by chance into your country, where I heard of the Baron de Montfier, as of a person much taken up with my favorite pursuits; perhaps we may be useful to each other; but I cannot hear of any thing like an inn in this vicinage, and am under the necessity of trespassing upon your hospitality."

The good Curé gave him a polite and hearty welcome, and offered him refreshments of whatever his house could supply.

"I beg your pardon for the liberty, sir," said the stranger, "but I have already partaken of your family fare; your servant, at my request, has supplied me, for my horse and I were both famishing, having met with no house of entertainment upon the road; and I was not prepared for so long a journey as it has proved; I am sure you will forgive my freedom—I am now quite refreshed, and ready to walk with you, or do whatever

you please, provided I do not trespass upon your time, or break in upon your engagements."

The Curé finding his guest so accommodating, ventured to propose to him to accept the Baron's invitation; and having desired Madame du Lot to see to the arrangement of an apartment for him, he conducted his visitor to the Castle. On their way, and in the course of conversation, the stranger informed Monsieur du Plessis, that his name was Forrest; that he was of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England, and that having traversed his own country alone in pursuit of improvement in his favorite study, he had determined about six years before to visit the Continent on the same plan; that he had been to the Low Countries, and from thence to Picardy, Normandy, and Brit-

tany, and lately in Anjou and Poitou; that hearing of the Baron de Montfier, he had determined to pay him a visit, and to spend a little time in investigating the state of agriculture in his village; and in suggesting such improvement as his experience might furnish.

Monsieur du Plessis, who was well aware that such a rencounter would be more welcome to a man of the Baron's turn of mind than the discovery of a mine of gold, anticipated the pleasure of the meeting and hastened his pace. An agreeable stranger could not indeed fail to be a relief in such a solitude as we have been describing, but a stranger, such as is here introduced, would have been so in the most judicious society. Mr. Forrest, although he did not speak French at all like a native, understood it well, was tolerably fluent, and perfect-

ly intelligible; his countenance invited to confidence, and his conversation never failed to confirm the favorable impression.

Arrived at the Castle, the Curé introduced his guest, and gave the history of his taste and pursuits as he had just received it. The Baron was no stranger to Mr. Forrest's name and character.

"Your reputation has preceded you, sir," said he, "in penetrating these solitudes: I have often wished, but never expected, that you would follow—believe me, the king himself would not be more welcome."

Mr. Forrest answered this compliment with a hearty shake by the hand; the Baron introduced his family, and the conversation soon became unrestrained.

The extraordinary occurrence of the arrival of an Englishman in the village, ran from mouth to mouth with incredible rapidity; and as its oldest inhabitant never remembered such an event, it excited a sensation of mingled alarm and curiosity.

The servants at the Castle, with all the nearest neighbours, assembled to consider whether to be pleased or frightened. Thèrése readily undertook the office of reconnoitring; and making a pretence to go into the saloon, she whispered some insignificant question to her mistress; and without at all attending to her answer, she fixed her bright black eye upon the stranger, whose exterior she examined very minutely, while he was talking to the Baron and totally unconscious of the notice he excited. Having made an observation tolerably

accurate as to his person, features, dress and manners, she hastened away full fraught with intelligence to her impatient audience in the kitchen.

"Well, Thèrése, what is the Englishman like?" exclaimed ten tongues at once, "Like!" returned the fair spy, "why I do not know any thing he is so much like as a Frenchman, with rather a fairer skin."

The whole company very much disappointed, insisted that it was impossible.

"Did you hear him speak? could you understand him?" were the next questions.

"He does not speak at all like a Frenchman," said Thèrése, "however, Mon-

sieur the Baron, seemed to understand him; then he is as rude as a bear, never says, 'I have the honor,' when he speaks, to say so and so; never rises from his chair, when Mademoiselle comes in or goes out; and never so much as looked at me; I believe he is very stupid."

Mademoiselle Fréron, the housekeeper, just now joining the company, pronounced, "that all the English were stupid, clumsy, awkward, and ill-bred.

"I have seen a great many of them at Nantz," continued the travelled lady, "Irish, they used to call them, they were all so."

In the mean time, Marion, the cook, who was preparing the supper, said, she supposed she must not lard the

fowl," "Why so?" enquired the house-keeper:

"Because the Englishman will not eat bacon," returned she.

"Lord help thy ignorance," exclaimed the housekeeper, turning up her eyes, "thou knowest nothing at all, every body eats bacon but Jews—the meat must be very fat, fresh killed, and half raw, for the English, they are a sort of cannibals; and do not like good things and well drest."

"Well done," said Thèrése, "Marion makes them Jews, and Mademoiselle cannibals; though to be sure 'tis much at one."

"I dont like to spoil my *roti* for for an Englishman," said the cook;

" here's little Pierrot has just killed a hedge-hog, suppose I half roast that; then, at least it will not be spoiling a good thing."

" I warrant he can eat a French supper;" said Mademoiselle Fréron, " if he cannot, e'en let him go without."

The supper was at length served in the usual manner, and after it was over, Antoine related that the Englishman held his fork in his left hand, and took up sauce with his knife; that he praised the dishes, and made a pretty good supper; but that he had not eaten so much bread as a sparrow.

Monsieur du Plessis, who had a numerous flock to attend, and who was far too good a pastor to have much leisure, recommended at parting, his guest

to the good offices of the Baron, who engaged him to spend the next day at the Castle, gave him a general invitation thither; and would even have offered him an apartment; but for some prudential reasons, on account of his daughter.

In the mean time, Madam du Lot was expecting their return with mingled impatience and anxiety; the good lady was much alarmed, that an animal of so dangerous a nature should be suffered to occupy the same house with herself; she had however taken all possible precaution against danger and surprise; she had allotted him a distant room, which the young Abbé had on his first arrival occupied, and where he could be awakened in the night when called to the assistance of any sick person, without disturbing the rest of the

family; she had caused the man servant's bed to be placed in a passage adjoining, from whence he could hear the least motion, and be at hand to give the alarm, in case the Englishman should have any treacherous designs; or any communications with a disguised army; which might, in her ideas, very probably, be concealed in the forest, taking advantage of a season of profound peace to have arrived thither; she had moreover placed the key on the outside of the door, meaning for further security to lock him in; for this purpose she waited till she thought he might be asleep, then stealing softly along the corridor, she turned the key twice, with trembling and extreme precaution. These prudent measures completed, she betook herself to repose, and rested as quietly as if no such formidable animal had been near her; she

even overslept her usual hour, perhaps in consequence of unusual watching and anxiety, and Mr. Forrest was stirring before her: on attempting to leave his apartment, he found himself, to his great surprise, a prisoner there; after some ineffectual attempts to escape, he gave up the point, and taking up his pocket-book, sat himself quietly down to make notes till he should be released.

Monsieur du Plessis, taken up with his morning avocations, did not seek his guest till towards the hour of breakfast; as that approached, he waited upon him to know how he had rested; when, finding him under lock and key, his surprise was not less than Mr. Forrest's, and his concern much more. He entered, making a number of apologies; for as the key was left on the outside,

he immediately concluded, that the fault was his own; and that on leaving the room the over night, he had inadvertently turned the key.—Mr. Forrest smiled at the circumstance, and was well satisfied with the explanation, not in the least suspecting the formidable light, in which he was considered by some of the family.

The Abbé De Louverie joined the party at breakfast, he was much de lighted with the stranger; and easily succeeded in making himself agreeable to him. The difference of their pursuits and ideas, did not impede the conversation; on some points their opinions were the same; and where they differed Mr. Forrest was so candid and unassuming that a dispute with him could hardly arise to unseemly warmth, with an opponent so polite as the Abbé;

although this last was a little opiniated. — Understanding that Mr. Forrest was to spend the day at the Castle, he offered to be his escort; and the two gentlemen set out, as soon as they thought it would be convenient to the Baron to receive them; On their way they met him; he was coming to pay the stranger a visit, and to conduct him; the encounter was mutually agreeable; the party joined and spent the morning in traversing and surveying the lands contiguous to the Castle; Mr. Forrest gave his opinion freely on the state of their culture, and suggested such improvements, as his knowledge and experience supplied; in particular, he recommended the introduction of potatoes and turnips, roots here unknown, even by name.— After a ramble of some hours, as they were directing their course towards the Castle, the Baron said to his visitor:

"You tell us Sir, that it was curiosity which induced you to seek this secluded spot, but I am convinced it was benevolence; our village has nothing to return you for the benefit it is likely to derive from your communications; your traffic with it, must be like that of the Indians, an exchange of gold for beads."

"I never yet have been any where, Sir," returned the traveller, "where I did not find something to learn, as well as to impart; in general, indeed, I have been the person benefited. I am not above receiving information from the most illiterate peasant, who has the authority of experience; but I have found many who have scorned to learn of me,—I may say, the greater part, for ignorance and conceit are wedded to each other, and though so mis-paired, rarely separated."

"You will find here," returned the Baron, "one at least, very docile to your instructions; I cannot answer for more."

He then proceeded to relate the many obstacles he himself had encountered from stupidity and wrongheadedness, which however had at length given way to unremitting perseverance."

"My vassals," continued he, "begin to be convinced that although not bred a farmer, I am a better judge of rural œconomy than most of them; and that I have their advantage sincerely at heart; many are by this time so recovered of their prejudices, that they would take my word upon trust for any experiment, but as you are a stranger, and an Englishman, be not surprized if you are at first taken for a wizard."

"I shall only be diverted," said Mr. Forrest, "I am accustomed to be taken for every thing but what I am, a plain well meaning man, whose taste leads to the study of nature, and who, when he can make that taste subservient to the benefit of his fellow creatures, has obtained his end, and the highest gratification."

"Such characters are so rare," returned the Baron, "that it is no wonder they should be misjudged: egotism is the *primum mobile* as much in villages as in cities: and perhaps with even fewer exceptions: where it does not appear, it is supposed to be concealed the better to effect its design:—as some animals lie in ambush, the more securely to dart on their prey: however, Sir, you must allow me to say, that I am myself sufficiently disinterested to believe that

another may be so too; you will be sure to meet with one, at least, ready to do you justice, and to appreciate your generous *devouement*; both interest and inclination are on your side with me, therefore you are sure to be right."

While the two gentlemen were engaged in this conversation, the Abbé had strolled out of hearing, he was not particularly interested in the subject, the study of art was more to his taste than that of nature, and he rather wondered that Mr. Forrest should come to Montfier, when he might have gone to Paris, or even to Rome; study agriculture in preference to the fine arts; admire nature, simple and unadorned; when he might have seen her to so much advantage from the hands of the most celebrated artist's, and seek the conversation of peasants, when he might have enjoyed that of the most enlightened among the literati."

Clara had found some English books in her Fathers library, with engravings well executed, the subjects of which, had long embarassed her—After dinner, she shewed them to Mr. Forrest; and requested he would explain them; he was not a little delighted to find among them, a fine edition of Shakespeare; and a small but very neat one of the Spectator.

" We know these authors by name," said the Baron, " but all the german I can muster; has not enabled me to find out their meaning; although the two languages are said to have so much analogy."

Mr. Forrest as he was explaining some of the prints, particularly, a scene between Rosalind, Silvia and Orlando, in As you like it, exprest particular satisfaction in having so unexpectedly met with his old friend Shakespeare, as he stiled him.

" I believe," said he taking up a volume of the Spectator, " that it is, this very book that relates a circumstance which took place in some polished society in France. One of the company proposed the question, that supposing each of them to be confined in separate prisons, and allowed only one author to cheer their solitude, whom they would choose? the choice of every one was the same, they were unanimous in naming Montaigne:

" For my own part;" continued Mr. Forrest, " I have often thought, that were I under such circumstances, I should choose Shakespeare, or here is the only author, that could divide my opinion, inimitable Addison!"

" They are then very excellent?" said Clara, " Oh! how I wish I could understand them!"

" You may very soon arrive at that, Mademoiselle," returned Mr. Forrest, " the English language is difficult to speak, but not to understand in reading, whenever the Baron thinks me worthy of so great a favor, I shall be too happy to be your instructor."

" I am not myself too old to learn to read a language;" said the Baron, " and Monsieur shall if he pleases, instruct all the family—daughter, father, and sons."

Clara embracing her father, said, " now papa, we shall see who will learn the soonest."

The master and the pupils being equally eager to begin, that very afternoon, while the sun was yet too high to walk, Mr. Forrest gave his first lesson.

CHAPTER XIV.

DISPUTES.

After this introductory scene, Mr. Forrest, whose good qualities were of that nature which always improve upon acquaintance, became a frequent guest at the Castle. The Abbé, although not so subject to bury his talent for penetration to dig up, did not, on the other hand, exhaust his mine on a first interview, but having always in store both information and a disposition to display it, was no less a very agreeable acquisition to the society.

It was settled that these Gentlemen should attend the family three times a week alternately, to give their lessons; and it very soon appeared, that the study of two languages so unlike, far from impeding as might have been apprehended, assisted each other. Comparisons of idiom, disputes of their several defects or excellencies, &c served to imprint on the minds of the students, words and phrases, which else perhaps the want of practice might speedily have effaced.

The families usually assembled of an evening, sometimes at the Presbytery; but most frequently at the Castle. Music, or innocent pastimes filled up the pauses in conversation, while little disputes, whence good humour and politeness were never excluded, sometimes enlivened it. The young Abbé would

often pretend to know more of English laws and customs than Mr. Forrest himself. The Baron would, upon these occasions, slily encourage him in order to provoke the latter, who was not, as has been observed, naturally communicative, to speak of his country, to describe its manners and peculiarities, and to disprove many absurd relations, which Monsieur de Montfier discovered with pleasure, were only the mistaken and ill founded ideas, of cursory travellers, ignorant alike of the language, and the usages of the people they undertook to describe.

Thus do our own countrymen post through foreign nations, tear the veil from the hearts of those whose faces they are hardly permitted to behold; tell you their sentiments, their morals, and their faith; account for whatever they con-

ceive aright or amiss; describe the interior of families into which they never were admitted; decide without evidence and without authority; but giving to their own little Island the preference in every thing, and flattering the prejudices of those who imagine themselves too philosophical to have any; they are sure to be believed.

"Your country is not yet emerged from the night of barbarism," said the Abbé one day to Mr. Forrest, "witness your savage delight in cock-fighting, in bull-baiting and boxing; but above all, the abject slavery of your women. On the day of marriage all the property of the wife, as well as her person, is given up to the absolute dominion of her husband. She is so complete a slave in law, that she is not liable to punishment for any breach of it she may have

committed in concert with him; being considered as a mere tool in his hands; her evidence cannot in any case be admitted against her sovereign lord and master; while he, on his part, can dispose of her in public markets, like a Guinea slave, or rather a beast of labour to which last to assimilate her the more, she has a halter about her neck; and this shameful practice, to the disgrace alike of Christianity and civilization, frequently occurs."

"I am not such a knight-errant Monsieur l'Abbè," returned Mr Forrest, "as to engage to combat all the windmills and giants that prejudice and misrepresentation may conjure up in my way; nor yet to maintain against reason and experience, that my mistress, or my country, are paragons of perfection, that are not to be found in na-

ture. I am ready to allow that cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and boxing are savage diversions, nay, that it is more civilized to strike with the sword than with the fist; as it is of later invention, and an improvement upon the art of murder; nevertheless, I defy you to prove that it is more humane. My countrymen are usually quiet, peaceable, and feeling, if they are not polite. They have, in general, a greater horror of homicide than your's or perhaps any other nation. There is a spirit of justice and generosity common to the very lowest of the rabble, that never will suffer a man to be exposed to unfair attacks; such as to be struck when unable to defend himself; by two at once, with weapons when he has none, &c. this is notorious, and I think you must have heard it—John Bull is a little disposed to good liquor, but he is less

contentious in his cups, than the Frenchman in his natural state."

"It is a well known fact, that two regiments of your country never can meet in the same cantonments without quarrelling, they will fight pitched battles with their side arms, with the inveteracy of natural foes; their feuds descend from father to son, and are perpetuated as points of honor in their several regiments. These particulars I hold from officers of your country; and indeed I have heard the Baron himself allow them to be true. Our English regiments do not meet, or part perhaps, without getting drunk together; but they can do so very peaceably and without spilling any thing but liquor. I believe there is something in the air of my country which disposes to serenity and peace, and which extends even to

irrational creatures; observing foreigners are invariably struck with the gentleness of our animals; and I have lately had continual opportunities of witnessing myself, how much they excel in tameness and docility.

"The Englishman seeks company less perhaps than most other nations; why so? because he is formed for domestic enjoyments, and is satisfied and happy at home. A few restless, discontented individuals wander abroad, squander their gold and their characters in distant nations; make them ring with their follies, their vices, and extravagancies, and bring an undeserved stigma upon their own. Hence the English are said to be more prone to rambling than their neighbours; a taste, for which they certainly have greater means, but I firmly believe, less inclination.

"In regard to the situation of our females, it is certain that the property of the wife is according to law, that of the husband, but this may be provided against by previous contract; in all other respects, it does not appear to me, but that our ladies have as much liberty as they can rationally desire, subject, it is true, to the restraints of decency and decorum, from which, I presume, such is my good opinion of them, that very few would wish to be exempt.

"Your last charge, Monsieur l'Abbé, is almost too absurd to deserve a serious refutation; and I should perhaps leave it to sink, from its own weakness and want of foundation; were I not anxious to remove as speedily as possible from the mind of Mademoiselle all unjust prejudices; and to persuade her that my country people are really civilized beings,

with whom the ties of marriage are respect-ed and binding to the husband as well as to the wife; the first cannot in any case be released from the engagement he has voluntarily contracted, but by the fault of the latter, that is to say, by her proved infidelity."

"Yet, Mr. Forrest," said the Baron, interrupting him, "With regard to the custom which the Abbé has mentioned, I really am acquainted with a person of whose veracity I have the highest opin-ion, who has often assured me that he himself had been present at your great public market in the city, when a man sold his wife with a halter about her neck for half-a-crown; he saw the bar-gain concluded, the money paid down by her new purchaser, and the woman delivered to him as a sheep or a cow might have been, and this in the pre-

sence of hundreds of spectators; and was well assured that an old and unrepealed law was the warrant for this disgraceful traffic."

"If ever there was such a law (allowing it for the sake of argument)" said Mr. Forrest, "for I do not believe it, it has been repealed by others existing. The man who thus disposed of his wife could have claimed her again the next moment, nor could the purchaser or any one else have detained her from him, but in open violation of the law. A man may divorce his wife for adultery, the charge against her being substantially proved; but should he be suspected of connivance in any shape, much more, should he be known to have delivered her himself to the arms of another, he would frustrate his own purpose, supposing him even rich enough to go

through all the expensive, but necessary forms of a suit in the Commons, and an Act of Parliament.

"You cannot deny, Sir," eagerly rejoined the Abbé, "but that the practice frequently occurs; if then it is against the law, why is it suffered?"

"It ought not, I grant you," said Mr. Forrest, "but what is every body's business, you know, is said to be nobody's. The practice never occurs, but among the very lowest of the rabble, people without name or character: it concerns no one but themselves, and is only noticed to be laughed at, when certainly it ought to be punished and prevented.—But let me ask *you*, Monsieur l'Abbé, have you not a law in France, in virtue of which a lady, provided she is of high rank and credit,

being dissatisfied with her husband, and having a gallant likewise of fortune and influence, may have the former shut up by *lettre-de-cachet*, if he is at all inclined to be troublesome?"

"*Vous plaisantez Monsieur*, you banter sir," replied the Abbé, "there certainly never was, or ever could be such a law."

"By what authority then," rejoined Mr. Forrest, "has the Countess de C— the *chere-amie* of the Duke de L—— procured her husband to be confined? The fact is notorious, it is known to all Paris, yet who notices it but as a matter of conversation and of course? Who interferes in this or similar cases that I could name in behalf of the injured person, or of public example; any more than when a drunken porter,

in a drunken frolic, sells at market his no less drunken wife? yet there is this material difference, your delinquents are persons of high rank and fashion, whose ill-conduct cannot be concealed, and who owe good example, or at least a shew of decency to the multitude, whose eyes they attract: If then it is contrary to your laws, why is it suffered?—I believe, Monsieur, you have no better reason to give me than the one I have just given you, and which I allow is far from satisfactory; but these ugly and too prominent features in the national countenance, strike strangers on a passing survey, while the natives from habit, behold them without disgust. I doubt there are such in eveiy country; they give the first unfavourable impression, and the generality of travellers go off with this, too indolent or too uncandid for a closer investigation."

"I am sorry," said the Baron, "that the unrestrained licence of our higher ranks, should furnish Mr. Forrest with so good an answer. It is thus Monsieur l'Abbé, that we perceive the moat that is in our neighbour's eye, and not the beam that is in our own."

CHAPTER XV.

A CHALLENGE.

Mr. Forrest though of a liberal turn of mind, was not however quite exempt from certain honest, English prejudices: he was of opinion that every nation has its peculiar style of musick; and would not allow, even to the Italian, any decided superiority over that of his own country.

"You say," said he, one day to the Abbé, "That the organs of the Italians are finer and more delicate than ours; be it so, and let them have their

finer and more delicate musick; at the same time, if our organs are stronger and less refined, let us have such strains as will affect them: What suits our feelings is the best musick for us: and it is a false taste, and a vicious refinement, which would substitute that of softer climates; as well might we adopt their diet, and their dress; but, we should be in danger of starving, my dear Sir, upon macaroni, lemonade and ices, and certainly perish with cold, if we had no better defence against the frequent visits of our rough neighbour Boreas, than slight silks, crapes and gauzes."*

The Abbé in an argument of at least five times the length, exulted on having

* The reader will recollect that we are talking of times of old, when it was not conjectured that the Greek costume, could ever have been adopted in our cold and variable climate.

the advantage; but as Mr. Forrest was equally certain of being in the right, the case was referred to the decision of the Baron.

"Papa," said Clara interposing, "I never heard an English song; now, if Mr. Forrest, would have the goodness to give us one, and then Monsieur l' Abbé, another in Italian; do not you think it might assist your judgment?"

"I am afraid, Mademoiselle," said the Englishman, "that you are in league against me, Monsieur l' Abbé, is a musician and a singer; I am neither, I never attempt a song, but in jovial company, when I am a little merrier than I hope you will ever see me."

"After a bottle of champain, perhaps?" said the Baron, "we will have one at

supper, and by the time you have finished it, you will perhaps be mounted to a proper pitch."

The Abbé said, he could sing best before supper, and without further preface, gave a comic and a serious air, of very admired composers. Mr. Forrest was the first to applaud both the music and the singer.

"My cause is prejudged," said he, "I cannot risk the musical reputation of my country, upon such unequal terms, and must beg leave to decline entering the lists as her champion."

Supper was soon after served, the Baron pushed about the bottle, with unusual alacrity.

"Allons Monsieur Forrest, *à l' angloise,*

to your friends, to your country, to your mistress,—What Englishman is without one? You must positively see the bottom of your bottle."

"Monsieur the Baron is determined to prove," said Mr. Forrest, thus briskly plied "that an Englishman can drink, whether he can sing or no, I believe I have had enough to raise my voice, if not to harmonize it." Thus saying, he pushed his plate aside, and sang in a strong, clear, and not unmusical voice, the national song of Rule Britannia.

"I know the sentence," said he, bowing as he concluded; "but I appeal against it; I *cannot* give you a specimen of good English music."

The company, however without deciding applauded, and Mademoiselle Clara, requested to hear another.

"We cannot be content with one from *you*," said she, "when Monsieur l' Abbé has given us two."

Mr. Forrest could not withstand a request which was more flattering than any praise; and without regarding a little sneer from the Abbé at the partiality of Mademoiselle for every thing English; he said he would try if he could succeed any better in a love song; he then sang with much grace, and to a very pleasing air the following words—

SONG.

Could I, with Philomela rise,
On vent'rous pinions as she tries,
To seek the Sun in kinder skies,
    Oh! I might trace my wanderer;
    My dear, dear wanderer,
    My truant wanderer,
I'd seek *my* Sun in kinder skies,
My dear, my truant wanderer.

The gentle breezes, could I stay,
That soothe the Southern heat of day,
To bear me with them on their way,
O! I might seek my wanderer,
My dear, &c.
My truant &c.
To distant regions I would stray,
And seek my absent wanderer.

With yon fleet vapors could I change,
Of hues so various, shapes so strange,
Swift with the sailing clouds I'd range
And seek my &c.
My dear, &c.
My truant &c.
Thro' fluid æther I would range,
To find my truant wanderer.

But wings, nor fav'ring gales have I,
A fetter'd female doom'd to sigh,
In thought alone I'm free to fly,
And seek my distant wanderer,
My dear, dear wanderer,
My truant wanderer,
My thoughts alone are free to fly,
And seek my distant wanderer.

Clara requesting to know the meaning of this song, was answered that she should have it as an exercise to translate, nor, did Mr. Forrest fail, the next morning, to present to Mademoiselle Clara a fair copy of the song she had requested: with his help she was not long in understanding it, and having caught the tune she speedily learned the words.

A few days after this lesson, the party being assembled at the Presbytery, Clara, equally to the surprize and delight of all present gave her English song.

The pleasure of hearing his native accents so unexpectedly, the imperfect pronounciation always so delightful to an English ear; the melody of Clara's voice, and the expression of her manner; altogether touched the heart of our countryman with a transport he had never before experienced.

"Now Monsieur l' Abbé," said he exultingly," will you allow any merit to the music of *my* country?"

"I am ready to allow infinitely to the musician of ours," returned the Abbé, "Mademoislle Clara, to evince her impartiality, will, I am persuaded, have the goodness to study an Italian air, against our next meeting; you triumph Monsieur, without a victory."

"I *do* triumph, Monsieur l' Abbé," returned the Englishman, "for most assuredly I have cause."

"I have been studying your favorite Shakespeare, Mr. Forrest," said the Baron, "with unremitting assiduity, but I almost despair of ever coming to a right understanding with him; your blank verse, as

you term it, is even more difficult to me than your rhymes."

"The chief difficulty in Shakespeare, Sir," said Mr. Forrest, "I take to be the obsolete words, with which he abounds; and his allusions to old sayings and customs, long discontinued, which are often so, I can assure you even to his country people. Nevertheless, I would not have you be discouraged, practice will familiarise you to his dialect; the notes will help you to the rest, and the better you understand, the more you will like him. I am, myself but just arrived at perfectly relishing, your incomparable Moliere, the rhymes in some of his best pieces, were as much in my way, as Shakespeares no rhyme appears to have been in yours. But now that I begin to be better acquainted with your tongue, my disgust at familiar dialogue in measure, is changed into admiration at the variety

with which it is diversified, and at the inimitable art that so agreeably adds to the grace and melody of verse the fluent ease, and nervous strength of prose."

"It is pleasant," said the Baron, "to hear such a testimony to the merit of our countryman, from the lips of so judicious a stranger,—when shall I be able to return the compliment in kind?"

"Sooner than you apprehend, perhaps Sir," returned Mr. Forrest, "though possibly not so soon as Mademoiselle your daughter, she has an aptitude at seizing the ideas of our British Bard, which astonishes almost as much as it delights me."

"Papa," said Isidore, somewhat abruptly, "do you know, what a John Bull is?"

"Do you know yourself, my dear?" replied his father.

"Why Papa," resumed the child, "Mr. Forrest is one, he says so, and he says, that all the English are so."

"Well my dear, but what is it, what is a John Bull?"

"Why have not I told you Papa, that it is an Englishman?"

"My dear boy, how can a man be a bull?"—"Why Papa, since a man can be an ass, I heard you say, the other day that Phillipot was one; why not a bull?"

"We call a man an ass, Isidore, who is stupid like one, but what resemblance can you find between Mr. Forrest and a bull?"

"Why are you a John Bull?" said the child, climbing on Mr. Forrest's knee, and looking him earnestly in the face, as if he sought the likeness there.

"Because, I am an untamed stubborn animal, my man;" said Mr. Forrest, "because I wear a round hat almost as immoveably as horns; because I have a strong head, that is, an obstinate one."

The child enquired, with a look of surprize, if English bulls wore hats?

"English bulls, are strange creatures, my dear," said Mr. Forrest, "but if my account of them does not satisfy you; you must come to England and judge for yourself; you shall have such a horse as mine, only somewhat smaller, a pair of boots, like puss in boots, a whip too, and be a little John Bull yourself."

"Such a horse as yours!" said the child, delighted, "oh yes! I will go to England and never mind the bulls."

Mr. Forrest's nag, was indeed well worthy of notice and admiration; and did not fail to attract both from the honest villagers of Montfier; a creature at once, so beautiful, so fleet and so gentle, had never before been seen there, the celebrated Zebra, so renowned in England, a few years ago, never excited more wonder or delight.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FEAST OF ST. CLARE.

It was now the 12th of August, the feast of St. Clare, a time of peculiar celebrity in the village, not only as being the name day of Mademoiselle de Montfier; but likewise for a ceremony of her institution. The best spinstress among the maidens, was every year rewarded with a silver distaff of dimensions to be worn as an ornament, and on this day Clara judged and bestowed the prize. On the eve, each candidate brought her work for inspection to the Castle, adorned with a *bouquêt* of flowers of a

particular color and sort, at once as an offering to the youthful mistress, and a distinguishing mark of her performance, for she was careful to preserve for herself another exactly corresponding. Mademoiselle Fréron, with two other experienced females weighed and examined the thread, which had been the occupation of the last year; to that esteemed the best, as excelling both in quality and quantity, the prize was affixed with green ribbon, and Clara herself taking possession of the tally appeared with it on the day of her fête.—Immediately after high mass, the young girls, candidates for the prize neatly attired in uniforms of white jackets and drab colored petticoats, and wearing on their heads the wreath of flowers agreeing with those that distinguished their work, with music preceding, walked in procession, to the Castle. The dinner tables for their entertainment were placed in the

great hall, with the work and ornamental flowers to distinguish the places of the guests. That which had the prize distaff in lieu of flowers, was placed opposite to where Clara was to be seated; meanwhile she took her station at the upper end of the hall, between the two rows of tables, with Mademoiselle Fréron and the other umpires on each side, to receive and decide on the merits of the claimants.—The procession advanced slowly to the music two and two, as it approached Clara, the girls courtsied as low as they could, and taking the wreaths from their heads placed them before her; but not one could boast a similitude with that worn by her, till Susette, the Miller's youngest daughter, approached with Marion Dantré, her wreath was intirely of white rockets of a very beautiful kind; there was no mistaking it, that worn by Clara being precisely the same; Mademoiselle Fréron replaced

the chaplet on her head, while the patroness with her own hands tied the envied prize round her neck, and then embracing, conducted her to her seat while her companions sang the following appropriate

HYMN TO INDUSTRY:

What miracles are wrought by thee,
Queen of our feast, fair Industry!
By thee the naked glebe is drest,
In Summer's sweetly chequer'd vest;
While our rich meads such verdure shew,
As never hands like thine bestow!
Chorus,
Our grateful songs we raise to thee,
Queen of our feast, fair Industry.

Half nature's blessings, but for thee,
Unknown, or unenjoy'd wou'd be;
Tasteless the banquet would be shar'd,
Were not the guests by thee prepar'd,
While homeliest fare which thou hast drest,
Is relish'd with the keenest zest.
Chorus,
Our grateful, &c.

To thee the feast, the dance we owe,
No joys like those thy toils bestow!
By thee each blessing is endear'd,
And threat'ning Winter comes unfear'd;
The wood is pil'd, the grain is stor'd;
For Industry has hiv'd her hoard.
Chorus,
Our grateful, &c.

Love too partakes the gen'ral joy,
No more a truant, idle boy;
He labors with the Shepherd youth,
His song inspires and learns his truth;
Nor shuns the nuptial tye to wear,
For what has Industry to fear?
Chorus,
Our grateful, &c.

Nought is impossible to thee,
Disease and death before thee flee:
Famine and plague thou canst prevent,
And change repining to content;
Nay, the decrees of heaven reverse,
And to a blessing change the curse!
Chorus,
Our grateful songs are rais'd to thee,
Queen of our feast, fair Industry!

The girls were then entertained at dinner, and soon after joined by their brothers and sweethearts in a dance upon the lawn.

Mr. Forrest was so silent an observer of the fête, that it was not easy to discover how it affected him. The Baron thought his apparent indifference savoured so much of disapprobation, that in addressing him, he even seemed to apologize for it.

" You are above such frivolous observances in England Sir," said he, " this is a fancy of my daughter's, and has been productive of some good effects; the ignorant peasantry are like children; and as such we entertain them."

Mr. Forrest turned aside to conceal the emotion he could not repress, and after striding away a few paces, with

one hand in his pocket, and the other before his eyes, he returned and took the Baron by the hand;

"We have much of the foppery of wisdom, in my country, my good Sir," said he, "we forget that the great majority of the human species are weak and unenlightened, and address their minds, when we should rather seek to attract their senses. Children of all ages, as you rightly observe, are susceptible of feeling, but not of reason — We are subject to another weakness, my dear Sir, we are apt to be ashamed of our religion, of our virtue, and of our finest feelings; I have just given you a proof of this; we had rather pass for proud than polite, and for stupid, than tender; as if it were manly, to be rough, rude, and unfeeling; but these are John Bull's honest

absurdities. Why should I be ashamed of the tears, which are a tribute to your benevolence, your virtue and your happiness? this is, indeed, *mauvaise honte.*"

The Baron returned Mr. Forrest a friendly shake of the hand, and after a silence of some minutes thus resumed the conversation.

"Our little *fete* has then your approbation, my worthy friend? nothing else was wanting to render it complete. Clara will be delighted that you approve her institution, for she has a high opinion of your judgment. *Vous autre*, you islanders, who have so much sterling gold in your composition are apt to conceal it, or to neglect its polish, while we, who have less, and that less mingled with a far greater portion of alloy, contrive that it should glitter more, and pass more gene-

rally current. *Mais allons.* We should be dancing. I am to have the honor of leading out the queen of the feast."

Mr. Forrest drew back; but there was a plot to make him join the dancers; the Baron sent Clara to engage him.

"Alas! Mademoiselle," said he, "I am no dancer; and besides, I am a stranger to your figures."

"Oh! if that is all," returned Clara, "we will soon teach you. Is it possible that you should be at all anxious about your performance in such an assembly as this?"

"You will allow of my anxiety not to disgrace so fair a partner," said Mr. Forrest, "believe me Mademoiselle, I

would be any thing but ridiculous to oblige you,—nevertheless, if you *will* have it so"——

Clara led off her captive in triumph; he was indeed, much more so, than he himself at all suspected. At the exchange of partners, Laurette was presented to him, her beauty proved irresistable, and once wound up to a proper pitch of hilarity, he ran down the remainder of the time very well of himself.

Supper was served at an early hour; the song went round, every one acquitting themselves, well or ill as they were able, but all with equal cheerfulness and alacrity The Baron sung an appropriate ditty, and the good Curé too. The Abbé, who hardly ever attempted any thing but Italian, was prevailed upon to give a lively French air. Mr. Forrest

had another English song in readiness, the words were as follows:—

SONG.

To seek a mate my joys to share,
A gentle soother of my care,
A nymph with kindness to assuage,
Youth's pleasures past, the pains of age;

I sought the ball, the park, the play,
When all was undisguis'd and gay,
I mark'd the sparkling eye-ball roll,
And sought to penetrate the soul.

Where the fond mother's prudent care,
Nurst in the shade her blooming fair,
Amid the walks of private life,
In the coy maid, I sought the wife.

But oft from pleasures lures apart,
Have I surpriz'd a roving heart;
And with the giddy, light and free,
Ah! sure, there was no mate for me!

From beauties pageant void of mind,
From wit to spleen and malice join'd,
From selfish int'rests wily toils,
My sick'ning heart averse recoils.

A lonely being doom'd to train,
No hand to foster or sustain;
Hopeless of dear, domestic love
To foreign climes forlorn I rove;

When sudden to my tranced view,
My dream appears divinely true,
I see a nymph and fondly trace,
Her lovely soul in all her face:

I see her, and my thrilling heart,
Ackowledges its counterpart;
I find her, but severe decree,
Only to know her lost to me!

In vain did he request of Clara, to whom he had already given these words, adapted to a French air, to join him in singing

then she declined, without assigning any reason, except that she liked the first song he had taught her better, and that this last was too difficult. This trifling circumstance gave Mr. Forrest an uneasiness for which he could not himself account, but which damp'd his spirits for the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PHILOSOPHER

IN DANGER OF BEING IN LOVE.

Mr. Forrest retired to rest, or rather to reflection; for the circumstance of Clara's partiality to the first song he had given her, continued to torment him.

"It is, doubtless, the sentiment that pleases her," said he to himself, "and this Chevalier, of whom I have heard so much, has made an impression on

her heart.—Yet the Baron has repeatedly assured me, that the young people loved each other merely as brother and sister, and were well convinced that there were immovable obstacles to a more intimate connection—Yet, what is it to me?"

"Have I really the weakness to cherish an inclination for a young person so absolutely out of my reach? her preference of another could hardly increase the distance between us. She cannot be mine; the Baron, with all his liberality of mind, will never consent to bestow his darling daughter, upon a stranger, without title or distinction even in his own country.—Have I really the selfishness to repine that the happiness which I cannot enjoy, should be the lot of another?"

Our philosopher however it might shock him upon reflection, had nevertheless this selfishness in common with the rest of mankind: the next day convinced him of it; he was to give his lessons, and finding the time hang heavy upon his hands, he concluded the fault was in his watch, and that it must needs be too slow; he set off, and arrived at the Castle, an hour before the usual time. The doors being left open at this sultry season, he entered without ceremony the apartment, where they usually studied, and surprised Clara at her desk, with her grammar and dictionary before her, and a picture in her hand, which so entirely engrossed her attention, that Mr. Forrest placed himself behind her unperceived.

"Yes," said she aloud, "Thèrése is in the right; it certainly might be taken

for his portrait; it is the exact expression of his countenance, such intelligence! such sweetness! such benignity! just so he looked, with such an air of mournful resignation, when he bade adieu to his sorrowing friends—Oh my dear Chevalier, my friend, my brother!——Wherever thou art, mayst thou find friends to discern thy worth, and to love thee like those thou hast left to lament thee. — Alas! there are, perhaps, some who engage thee too much—you no longer write to us——perhaps——yet, what is it to me? perhaps you have met some fair American worthy of your choice, and who engrosses all your attention."

"Alas! why am I so selfish as to think of such a probability with regret?"

Clara dropped a tear upon the picture of St. Lewis, and after contemplating it in silence a few minutes longer, put up the box, and sang the last verse of her favorite English song:—

"But wings nor fav'ring gales have I,
"A fetter'd female doom'd to sigh,
"In thought alone I'm free to fly,
"And seek my distant wanderer."

Meantime Mr. Forrest stood rivetted to the spot in the most torturing embarrassment, and not in the least consoled to have discovered, that the selfishness he thought so culpable in himself, was common to the fair object that appeared to him so perfect: he durst not move, and hardly breathe, equally dreading the moment of detection on Clara's account as upon his own. A lively French Marquis would have been at no

loss for an expedient to have saved himself and the lady from confusion; but our honest, aukward countryman, could think of nothing better than to attempt to steal softly out of the room; this he was about to effect, when the two little boys came running into it, "*Bon jour*, Monsieur Forrest," they exclaimed both in a breath, "are you here already? sister, look! there's Mr. Forrest behind you."

Clara turned hastily round, with a look of distressful enquiry, it is impossible to describe.

"I beg pardon for listening to your song, Mademoiselle," stammered out Mr. Forrest"—I—I—I was in hopes——

"Are you then but just come?" enquired she faintly, and unconscious tha.

her cogitations had been uttered aloud, she speedily recovered herself.

The Baron now joining his children the lessons began; but the master was so absent, so inattentive, and out of spirits, that it did not escape the notice even of the little boys.

" Isidore reads English just as if it was French," said his brother, " and Mr. Forrest never says a word."

" Let us put by the lessons," said the Baron, " I am afraid we fatigued our good friend yesterday; a walk, perhaps, would be better for us all; suppose we go and see how the barley goes on?"

Mr. Forrest pleaded a head-ache, that common excuse for the heart ache, and accepted the invitation. Clara preferred

to continue her studies with her brothers, and the gentlemen went out upon their scheme.

When they were gone, she found that she had caught Mr. Forrest's disorder, and that it was impossible for her to attend to her employment. She revolved in her mind the occurrence of the morning; but could not, from thence, account satisfactorily to herself, for Mr. Forrest's apparent disorder; unconscious, as we have already observed, of having thought aloud, she concluded that even if he had seen her with the picture of St. Lewis, he could not know who gave it to her, or why it was so cherished; nor at any rate could there be any thing to trouble him in the matter; for the least idea of his being jealous of her favor, never reached her imagination.

"Perhaps," thought she, "as I have heard that Protestants accuse us of superstition and an idolatrous worship of images, Mr. Forrest, living among them may have imbibed some of their prejudices, and concluding that I was paying some undue homage to the picture of the Saint, be shocked at my supposed fault."

Thus Clara settled the point with herself, if not quite satisfactorily, at least more so than would have been the case had she thought that Mr. Forrest suspected her of what she did not suspect, nor would have avowed in herself; a passion for the Chevalier du Plessis.— Yet with all her little sophistry, she was far from being perfectly at ease.

While the gentlemen were taking their walk, Mr. Forrest could not refrain from

a few questions relative to the Chevalier.

" Is it long," said he to the Baron, " since you heard of the young man you regret so much?"

" It is very long," answered the latter " at least our friendship for him makes it appear so. We are extremely anxious to hear of his safe arrival at St. Domingo. I have this morning, at my daughter's earnest request, sent to the post to know if there were any letters."

" Mademoiselle is perhaps more anxious than you," said Mr. Forrest, " I think it highly probable, that a partiality rather beyond friendship should have taken place between the young people."

"I believe myself," answered Monsieur de Montfier, "that neither would have been very sorry, if providence had so ordained, as that they might have spent their lives here together with me: Could it have been, I were perhaps the happiest of the three; but it could not, my friend; the Chevalier, has an ambitious father, and this father an obedient son; my daughter is reasonable and virtuous,—yet perhaps, it is as well, that the young folks were so soon separated."

Mr. Forrest was strongly tempted to inquire into the Baron's views, relative to the disposal of his daughter, but timidity tied his tongue, "It were better," said he mentally, and after a short pause, "to be well satisfied as to my own, in the disposal of myself." He continued thoughtful and absent during the remainder of the walk; and declined the Ba-

ron's invitation to return with him to dinner.

In the afternoon he sauntered out alone, but instead of going as usual to see the peasants at their labors, he sought the solitude and silence of the woods.

" It is a beautiful country," said he, as he surveyed it from an eminence through a break;" the misfortune would not be so great, to be confined to the culture of it for life, with such a wife as Clara, and such a father as the Baron de Montfier.—Perhaps, to have his daughter always with him, and a son of his own turn of mind, he might be induced to overlook certain objections.... but how my wishes mislead me! Clara loves another.....true, but young hearts are flexible....the present lover has cer-

tainly an advantage over the absent one...... Oh! friend Forrest, friend Forrest, believe me thou art an old fool; a pretty figure thou wouldst make, sighing at the feet of a youthful beauty; make up thy mind and thy baggage, and set off without delay instead of remaining here to make thyself ridiculous."

Such were a part of the many reflections, that chaced each other through the brain of our poor philosopher, as he measured with unequal steps the wild haunts of the beasts of the forest.

"Yes, I must be gone," he exclaimed aloud, and he directed his course towards the Castle. As he quitted the wood, he perceived at a short distance the Baron, with Clara leaning on his arm in the

path that led to the Presbytery; he advanced to meet them.

"We were coming on purpose to enquire after your health," said the former, "your scholars are all under great anxiety about you; the boys in particular were in such a hurry, they have ran on before—how fares it my good friend?"

"I hope your head-ach is over," said Clara in a tone of interest and kindness," I am the more anxious it should be so, as I fear, I have been partly the cause of it. Our noisy party of yesterday, and the unusual exertion of dancing so much, are very likely to have deranged you. I am sorry to have abused your complaisance."

Mr. Forrest brightning up at the attention manifested towards him, cheerfully replied,

"I had my country disorder, this morning, an ugly little imp, called the spleen, born and bred in our foggy island, had by some means discovered his countryman here, but I have left him in the pure air of Montjoli yonder, where I think he must needs breathe his last."

"Allons," said the Baron, "when the patient can jest upon his malady, his friends have good reason not to despair of his cure."

The party walked on to the Presbytery, where they spent a cheerful evening together, and Mr. Forrest forgot that he was to leave them the next morning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LETTERS AND PREPARATIONS.

Another month stole away unperceived and the vintage arriving, found Mr. Forrest still at Montfier; letters were received from the Chevalier du Plessis, and all were in harmony of spirits.

These letters were addressed to the good Curé, and the Baron; they gave an account of the safe arrival of the Chevalier at St. Domingo, after a short and prosperous voyage; described the face of

the country and his first impressions on beholding it; spoke much of his affection for, and continual remembrance of his friends at Montfier, requested to hear from them by every packet, and promised to write more at large by the next.

Mr. Forrest sometimes talked of removing, but was easily diverted from his design; if a design it could be called, of which he only talked without thinking: every one loved him, and every one dreaded the idea of his departure.

"Stay with us," the Baron would often say, "as long as we have any thing to interest or amuse you; when the winter approaches, you shall be at liberty, we cannot be so unreasonable as then to seek to detain you in our solitudes."

" If you detain me through the autumn," answered Mr. Forrest, " I shall stay the winter in spite of you; I wish to see how you weather it; and am certain that, as to myself, I shall spend it agreeably, if it is with you. I am not a very lively companion; but in the long evenings of the first cold months, you may perhaps be glad, even of me."

" We shall take you at your word," my good Sir, " returned the Baron," but be careful how you come to a determination, for once taken, you must abide by it. When our winter is set in, the roads all about are impassable, and you might as well think of escaping from Greenland. Not a letter can reach us, nor any news of the busy world; we are in a state of torpor with regard to it, and must necessarily find our resources in ourselves."

"You will not frighten me," said Mr. Forrest, "I shall lay in my winter stores, and bid defiance to cold and *ennui*."

One day, in their walks, the gentlemen called in at several cottages; it was towards noon, and they found most of the inhabitants at their dinner. This meal consisted of soup, perfectly meagre, and pulse or roots; in one house alone Mr. Forrest remarked, a very small piece of salted pork.

"I was thinking," said he, to the Baron, as he came out of this last, "what vigil it could be till we saw this little bit of meat; is it possible my dear Sir, that your peasantry should be so hearty, so healthy and contented, if such is their daily fare? I could not dine in comfort myself if I did not think

that each of my neighbours, had his bit of bacon every day."

"Nor I either, my good friend," returned the Baron, "were I not perfectly convinced, that it is essential neither to their health nor to their happiness, that they should fare better than they actually do. Why seek to increase their wants and their diseases? If nature is content with frugal fare, why give her other cravings? When first I came to reside among these good people, I judged as ill, and consequently felt as keenly as you; and I am afraid, literally killed two aged persons with kindness;"

"One of these, grandmother to the very person, who now attends on my daughter, had attained her 96th year, with sound health of mind and body; she could still knit and spin, was neither

blind nor deaf, nor in the least inclined to be dumb, I can assure you. The good woman, interested the late Baroness, my poor wife, who was then living; she thought it hard, that so aged a person should be destitute of a few indulgencies, towards the close of a long laborious life, and requested that she might be removed to the Castle, and have the run of the house. In an evil hour, for the poor woman, I gave my consent; her constitution was not proof against such an utter change of diet; in two months, she was in her grave.— This instance did not however open our eyes, the aged father of my Bailiff fell sick, and Madame was sure, he wanted more care and better nourishment; he was accordingly removed to the Castle, lodged in a close apartment, and fed with rich broths; the poor man, who had some slight degree of fever felt it

rapidly increase; but having the natural good sense of his family, he reasoned his own case, and desired of himself to be sent home; he recovered, and is living still; he has often told me since that Madame's good nursing, would have killed him. A third taken under our roof in similar circumstances, was soon after carried out in his coffin.— Old Guilloit often talks of his fellow sufferer; 'Ah poor Ambroise," he says, "if he had had the resolution to have given up Madame the Baroness's good cheer, he might be alive as I am still; but poor fellow! he was for a short life and a merry one," he was, nevertheless eighty-four, when he died. The constitution of the body is like that of the mind, my dear Sir, adversity furnishes the best school, and the wholesomest diet for both. I am convinced that it would be doing these poor

people a serious injury to procure that their tables should be better supplied; I would add to their comforts as much as possible, without increasing their wants, there is usually plenty of wholesome nourishing food for every one, and if by accident or misfortune, it happens to fail, between Monsieur the Curé and I, the deficiency is carefully supplied; you live too well in England, and hence it follows, that your troops bear hardships, the worst of any nation in Europe."

In the month of October, Mr. Forrest made an excursion to Paris, in order to provide for his winter campaign; he supplied himself with books, French and English, and laid out a considerable sum in purchasing for his kind entertainers whatever he thought might conduce to their comfort, convenience, or amusement, during their enforced confinement.

New music was not forgotten, nor variety of toys and pastimes for the children, most of which were not quite unworthy, of such as did not always conceive themselves too wise to mingle in their diversions. He had previously sent an order to England for two fine horses, with which he meant to present the Baron; these he had appointed to be landed at St. Maloe's, whither, on receiving notice of their arrival, he proceeded himself to meet them. Mr. Forrest had brought a servant with him from England, but the prudence of this man, not being equal either to his honesty, his patriotism, or his bravery, his master had been necessitated to part with him, for the two last qualities were for ever engaging him in some affray.

Mr. Forrest had often regretted his loss; he did so more particularly at this

juncture; when his intelligence about cattle, and his fondness of them, would have been so highly useful; for he wished to have presented his nags in the best possible order, from the hands of an English groom; not however meeting with any such, after much inquiry; he engaged a man to lead them, and travelling by easy stages, he arrived at Montfier, about a month from the time he had left it. He called first at the Castle, where he met with the most cordial reception.

"We have missed you, my good friend," said the Baron, "Oh! you cannot think how we have missed you!"

Mr. Forrest returned in silence, a hearty shake of the hand, and looked around him, for the welcome of the other part of the family.

"How good you are, Mr. Forrest," said Clara, as he was distributing some trifles from his pockets to the children, "and how much we are obliged to you!"

"And how glad we are to see you, Mr. Forrest," said Isidore, running eagerly to him, "we were all afraid you would not come back, and sister was *so* sorry, *so* sorry, you can't think."

Mr. Forrest kissed the child and cast a timid look towards Clara, that seemed to say, "may I believe him?"

Clara blushed.

"I am ashamed of my injustice," said she, "to have suspected for a moment that you would leave us without bidding adieu, all the time that you

were occupied with nothing but schemes for promoting our comfort."

The traveller felt very sensibly the kindness of his friends; though he only expressed his pleasure, by rubbing his hands and looking delighted.

In the midst of the satisfaction of the scene, arrived Monsieur du Plessis, with somewhat further to increase it; he had just received a packet of letters from St. Domingo. And while Mr. Forrest went to see to the lodging and entertainment of his fine horses, the dispatches were eagerly perused; they consisted of two long letters from the Chevalier du Plessis, one to the Baron, the other to the Curé; in both, he spoke with delight of having received a packet of welcome intelligence from each of them;

and gave a satisfactory account of his own health and situation; in that to the Baron, he entered into some details relative to the country, treated of the soil and culture, as of objects peculiarly interesting to his old friend; mentioned slightly the family of the Marchioness d'Alphonse, where he had been well received, but said nothing of his own feelings, except in regard to the kind friends from whom he was separated: these letters were serious but not sad, and concluded with a piece of intelligence very acceptable to the children, "that some jars of sweetmeats were on the way, which he hoped would arrive before the setting in of the winter;" he further added, "that he was instructing a parrot for Mademoiselle Clara, which he flattered himself would be a tolerable proficient in French by the spring,

when it should be the bearer of its master's most profound respect to her."

Mr. Forrest returning participated in the pleasure of his friends. The supper was very gay; he produced, further to enliven it, the new songs he had brought from Paris, and requested the Abbé to sing one of them which he had purchased for its humor.—The latter readily complying, caught the air in an instant, and sung with much grace and vivacity—as follows:

There liv'd they say, in days long past,
A Baron of renown, sir,
So keen a sportsman that at last,
Himself he hunted down sir,
He parted with his fair estate,
His goodly castle strong sir,
His feudal rights and massy plate,
And all for an old song sir.

Horses and servants ev'ry one,
He pack'd them all away sir,
And for his page he kept alone,
His trusty spaniel Tray sir,
His bugle horn reserv'd he too,
His solace and his pride sir,
And his lov'd pastime to renew,
He slung it by his side sir.

His stiff jack-boots he pulls him on,
But not to ride at all sir,
For with his dog he trudg'd along,
Towards the capital sir.
Behold him now upon the road,
And now in Paris street sir;
Now taking up his new abode,
In lodging-house complete sir.

Next morn awaking with the dawn,
Around he casts his eyes sir,
And on the smoke-dried canvas drawn,
A painted chace espies sir,
Pleas'd he beholds the foaming boar,
The huntsman and his steed sir,
And panting hounds course on before,
With well depictur'd speed sir.

To join the sport he was not slow,
Quick from his couch he bounds sir,
He capers, runs, cries "*Tally-ho!*"
And then his horn he sounds sir;
Tray opens to the well-known cry,
And joins in chorus strains sir,
And round and round the room they fly,
As on their native plains sir.

Above the joyous Baron's head,
A worthy knight there lay sir,
Who snor'd away his time in bed,
And thus his debts would pay sir;
The sounds athwart the unceil'd beam,
Pierce sonorous and clear sir,
And startle from his morning dream,
Th' astonish'd Chevalier sir.

Enrag'd he gains the Baron's room;
"S'death sir! whence all this clatter?
"To plague your neighbours are you come?"
"—Why how now what's the matter?"
The Baron tranquilly replied,
"Sure, sir, I have a right sir,
"On my own ground to hunt and ride,
"Or morning, noon, or night sir."

The Knight retires, the joyous twain,
 Their fancied chace pursue sir,
Till sudden torrents pour amain,
 And souse them thro' and thro' sir;
For from aloft the treach'rous Knight,
 Their harmless sport assails sir,
And thro' the rafters in despite,
 Sends down the rain in pails sir.

The Baron now with anger dread,
 Swift to his neighbour hies sir,
Whom seated quietly in bed,
 With *fishing-rod* he spies sir.
" Zooks Knight, such games I'll make you rue!"
 He answers. " Cease your wrangling;
" We each our diff'rent tastes pursue;
 " You hunt sir,——I am angling."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.